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DIGITAL ART AND ELECTRONIC CULTURE

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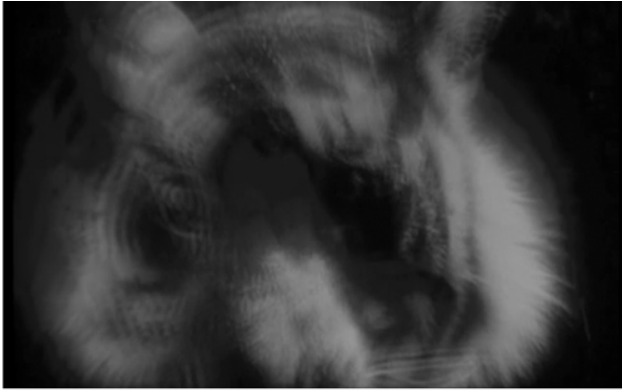
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Carlos Casas At Netmage 2010. The Audiovisual Cemetery

Silvia Bianchi



NETMAGE.10 International Live-Media Festival
Bologna 21/22/23 January 2010

The latest edition, the tenth, of the International Festival Netmage took place some weeks ago. This edition investigated rarefied and dreamlike territories, through the choice of a deconstructive approach to music and video.

The key-image is that of transformation, of change, the element is the wake, which shows us the passage of an event without becoming temporal, but rather physical. The image of the festival, created by the Spanish Carlos Casas, is a trace of an inner journey revealed for the first time to the public, the presentation of the work in progress realised by the artist during the preparation of his latest film on the

elephants' graveyard, a sacred place which is, at the same time, an impalpable border between India and Nepal, a rarefied space. We had the chance to interview Casas on the second day of the Festival.

Carlos Casas is a filmmaker and a visual artist; his work is a crossover between documentary films, film and visual and sound arts. His last three films have been awarded prizes in prestigious international festivals such as the ones in Turin, Madrid, Buenos Aires and Mexico City. Some of his videos have been presented at collective exhibitions.

After the experience at Fabbrica, , in 2001 he began a trilogy of works called The Enf Trilogy which is dedicated to the most extreme conditions of our planet, focusing on Patagonia, the Aral Sea and Siberia. Carlos Casas, who among other things is at the head of the Von Archives label together with the artist Nico Vascellari, is particularly interested in field recording and sound archives.



We ask Carlos how his interest in the elephants' graveyards came about (the Cemetery, his latest work, was exhibited in the form of archives and history notes for the film, this year at Netmage, which also produced it). He tells us that he has always felt really curious about this place-no place.

He gives ground to it telling us that not long ago, having already started collecting material and having planned the realisation of a documentary film on this subject, he found out that such interest had roots much older than he actually thought. He had always been very attracted by the American films about the jungle and, in particular, by the final scene of Tarzan in which the protagonist and Jane are guided by an old dying elephant to this sacred and hidden place which is the graveyard of the elephants.

Classical documentary films like Grass (1925), Chang: A Drama of the Wilderness (1927) and King Kong (1933), the film adaptations of Lost

World and exotic movies dating back to the 30's, 40's, 50's, the golden age of adventure films, were fundamental for Casas, in his training as well as in his research.

Just as the literature of Kipling, Sanders, Milton, and Burroughs, where he sought isotopes and ideas. This part of the analysis found a place in which to express itself within Netmage 2010 with the installation Cemetery in which chunks of the classical films were reproduced by the layering of images with an overlap of the film which was broadcast on the same TV from the beginning to the end and vice versa in an unveiling of recurring symbols.

The first part of the research work by Casas also includes an iconographic section, ranging from the study of the narrative inside the cemetery, to the study of Buddhist and Hindu iconography, and their collision in the reading of death and reincarnation, in researching a mystical and ritual framework of the ceremony.

This part of the work, which contains the guidelines, the inspirations and the map for the creation of the film is the one collected in the festival program of Bologna which has been transformed into a true book of notes, released and open to the various interpretations of the audience. This thanks the choice of leaving images

coming from analogical and digital photographic archives without captions and presenting them in non-linear order.



The artist explains that the archive could not be complete without the construction of a sound encyclopaedia, which could be used to guide the preparation of this road movie. Research has been done and recordings have been collected. They were joined together in the preparatory phase of the film.

Casas is very passionate about banks of sounds, field recording, symphonic collections and requiem. For Netmage, hollow spaces between one room and the other had been transformed by the artist in ethereal sound environments, places where it was possible to get in touch with the archives. He cites works by Pierre Henry, Francisco Lopez, Chris Watson as key-stones to him and his production. He tells us that Watson is working with him and will implement the recording fields for the creation of

The Cemetery.

The last part of the production envisages work in loco and so at this stage the author will move to India in order to observe and record, in order to map the territory searching for hidden elements of contact between man and sacred animals. In other words, for the essence of his work. He hopes Chris Watson, who worked with him on the previous trilogy, will accompany him also in this hard experience, in this journey.

The author is also working with the scholar Katy Paine, who heads the Elephant listening project at Cornell University. She has studied the communication code between elephants for years. In particular the vibrations produced by them during their death-dances. He explains that Ariel Guzik is working with him on the research on sound and that she is trying to build an instrument able to reproduce this sound, as he had worked on the sounds produced by whales while realising *Hunters since the beginning of time (Siberia)*, the documentary on the life of whale fishermen from the Bering Sea.

Casas tells us that at first the idea of unveiling his work worried him. He felt he could almost seem boring to those who would have had to deal with all that material which does not have a definite shape. It was basically the

first time for him to share his research. It also was the first time for Netmage to present the work of an artist in the form of data files, notes, audio-visual experiments, and research prior to a film in a very pure form.



Casas revealed to us that it was really exciting to show his work in progress and that now that he has opened his

store he has actually figured out how the film can be continued. We are fascinated and enraptured by the magic of the jungle emanated by those sounds, by the chance to see the images that inspired him, as if we were opening a travel diary. We feel allowed to rummage in an enchanted casket, it seems we can understand how to work on the realisation of a documentary and that we can find our way in it.

<http://www.netmage.it/2010/>

<http://www.carloscasas.net/>

<http://www.vonarchives.com/>

Mindful Technologies. Aware Objects And Eco-visualizations

Serena Cangiano



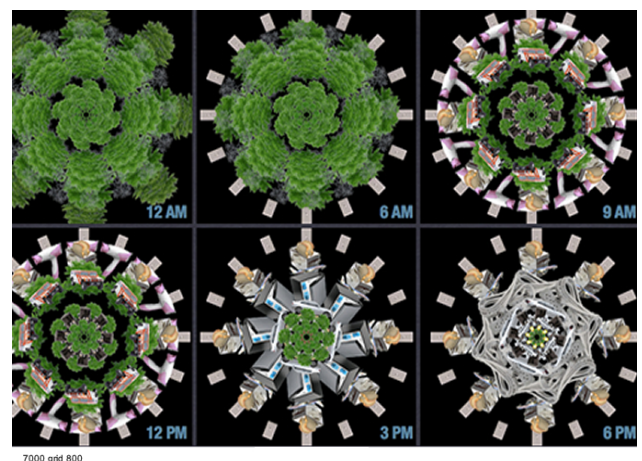
Visual Energy Aware Clock - Courtesy of visual Voltage

Visual voltage is the travelling exhibition promoted by the Swedish Institute and the Interactive Institute whose Berlin version Visual Voltage Amplified had its opening on last January 7th at the Felleshuset, one of the buildings of Scandinavian Embassies complex in Berlin.. The exhibition, supervised by Susanne Jaschko shows projects, concepts, and experimental works from artists and designers who critically deal with of energy production and consumption in an age of global sensibility to the environmental issues.

Clocks and cables visualising the domestic consumption of electricity, lamps working as dryers, artificial environments fed by the of CO2 meters, are only few of the solutions

on show in the Aware Objects section, “conscious” objects, that is objects capable of communicating data about their energy consumption and making their owners aware of their good or bad behaviours as to their environmental sustainability.

The Aware Objects on exhibit at Visual Voltage Amplified make tangible a research perspective highly relevant as to the hot issues impacting on the future. In the exhibition, both art and design converge and contaminate and overlap each other, making to coincide approaches and methods that, albeit already consolidated, lead to innovative results by introducing new technological features.



Aimed at supporting the expressive potential of the experimentation in

the eco-visualization field, there is today an actual technological development which has led to the evolution of the Sensing Technologies, computational graphics, network systems, real-time data processing applied to locative media and digital mapping.

This research approach characterises the interdisciplinary environment called eco-visualization or in other words adoption of art and design techniques in order to confer visibility to otherwise invisible environmental data in order to promote the awareness of energy depletion and environmental pollution through visual feedbacks.

The Eco-Visualization finds its historical roots in the Environmental Art, in the cultural and artistic activism of the '60s as well as in some collective performances of the '80s (J. Beuys, 7000 Oaks, 1982). It is based on the convergence of three fields media art, information visualization and affordable design.(1)

Pioneer and theoretician of the eco-visualization is Tiffany Holmes. In 2007 Tiffany Holmes realised 7000 Oaks and counting an animation visualizing in real time the electrical power consumption at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications of the University of Illinois. In 2004 she realised Floating Point, , a web

animation visualising in real time the variations in the water oxygen concentration, monitoring therefore the qualitative and quantitative impact of the human pollution on the marine ecosystem.

Originated by the cooperation with research centers dedicated to measuring and monitoring environmental data, the eco-visualization projects are aimed at opening a scientific perspective to a wide audience, spreading the information through artistic visualizations computer-generated, transforming the data into images, lights, colours, abstract graphical elements so communicating intangible values fostering the adoption of sustainable lifestyles.

Aimed at supporting the expressive potential of the experimentation in the eco-visualization field, there is today an actual technological development which has led to the evolution of the Sensing Technologies, computational graphics, network systems, real-time data processing applied to locative media and digital mapping.



For instance in the Pigeonblog project of Beatriz da Costa, Cina Hazegh e Kevin Ponto, a group of pigeons equipped with sensors, GPS and microcontrollers monitored the CO₂ data in Los Angeles skies and sent them to Google maps. Accessing a personalized platform on Google Maps the users could follow the pigeons visualizing the pollution data with their geo-coordinates in real time.

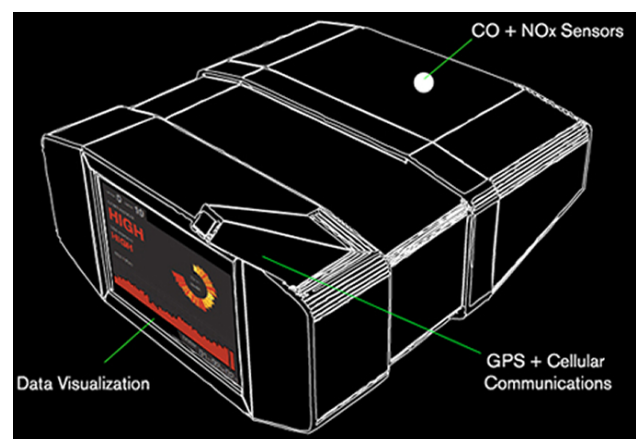
In the same year of Pigeonblog, 2006, the Air - Area's Immediate Reading experiment was started. People from a Manhattan District were required to monitor the CO₂ and ozone levels through wearable devices built by an independent group of researchers and artists called Preemptive Media.

Analyzing these projects, one notices that the research horizon of the eco-visualization extends to other domains and addresses other questions. If the goal of eco-visualization is that of instilling more

consciousness into people and consequently modifying their lifestyles, how much the efficacy of its methods and techniques depend from the actual involvement of the users?

Which are the strategies, systems and technologies to be developed in order to generate the social activism, out of the self-consciousness, so transforming the people from objects of the change into subjects promoting such change ?

Strictly linked to the field of eco-visualization, was then born the concept of Citizen Science, i.e. a new kind of mobile computing in which the cell-phone through the implementation of new sensors is changed from a communication device into a personal instrument for monitoring environmental data and hence a catalyst for the so called Participatory Urbanism (2).



Air - Area's Immediate Reading - Img Courtesy of Preemptive Media Project

A recent example of citizen science project is CamMobSens (Cambridge

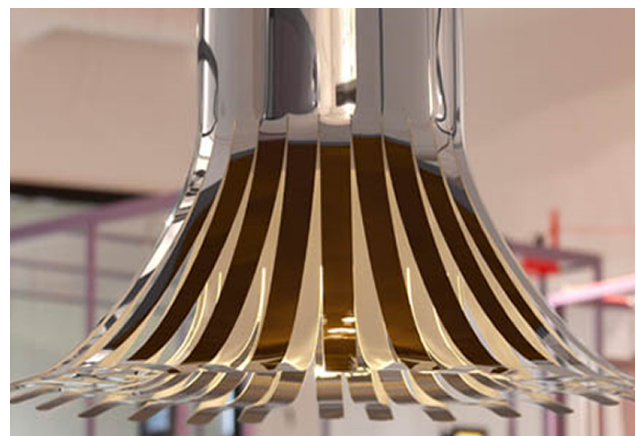
Mobile Urban Sensing), developed at the University of Cambridge within the triennial project Environmental Sensing System Across Grid Environments (MESSAGE). The project was providing for the implementation in 2006 of pollution sensors on Nokia mobiles for monitoring the pollution of the Cambridge area. Data and itineraries of the bikers group involved were sent to a webmap through a GPS system.

In 2009 thanks to the evolution of the mobile-sensing technologies the project MESSAGE from an experiment tool became an actually usable system which allowed London citizens monitoring the environmental data of their town through their cell-phones (3).

Eco-visualization, Citizen science, Participatory urbanism and mobile sensing are highlighting this phenomenon: the new technologies, on one side are extending the capabilities of monitoring the invisible data characterizing the living environment around us, be it inside or outside, on the other side they are extending the modalities and solutions for rendering these data through informative visual systems based on very beautiful images generated via techniques and approaches increasingly different from the analytical-scientific ones and closer to those more properly defined

as infoaesthetic.

In this phenomenon we wish to outline two aspects. The first one being the cross-contamination between different disciplines, the convergence between art and design and their re-configuration as to the need of formulating questions and issuing answers such to satisfy the expectations of our society in terms of scenarios characterized by climate changes and scarcity of energetic resources. The second one pertaining to the goal of defining new strategies for inducing mankind to behavioural changes in their lifestyles.



Flower Lamp - Courtesy of Visual Voltage

What is worth of mentioning with regard to the second issue is that in all the project aspects both as to arts, design or technology the general framework for generating the behavioural change is based on concepts such as “consciousness acquisition”, “social activism”, and “agents for change” rather than “persuasion”, “sensitization”, and “passive information users”.

Notes:

1 - [Tiffany Holmes, Eco-visualization: Combining art and technology to reduce energy consumption, C&C'07, June 13-15, 2007, Washington DC USA](#)

2 - Eric Paulos, R.J. Honicky, and Ben Hooker, Citizen Science: Enabling

Participatory Urbanism, in [Handbook of Research on Urban Informatics: The Practice and Promise of the Real-Time City](#), Hershey, PA: Information Science Reference, IGI Global. Curated by Marcus Foth, IGI Global, 2008

3 -

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/8126498.stm>

Acoustics And Serendipity. An Interview With Jose' Manuel Berenguer

Barbara Sansone



We had the pleasure and honour of going to meet José Manuel Berenguer in his home. José Manuel Berenguer is a key figure in the electro-acoustic experimental scene in Spain. A polyvalent artist, with a rich CV of experiences in various fields, and also co-director of the Orquesta del Caos, he is a likable man, open to dialogue and of enormous cultural knowledge. You could listen to him talk for hours without lowering your level of concentration. His professional and artistic journey is fascinating.

A doctor in medicine, an expert in neurophysiology, a guitarist in his youth. Under the guidance of Gabriel Brncic and Lluís Callejo, who brought him to new paths of musical exploration and introduced him to musical applications of maths and

computer science, year after year he became the person who he is today: a creator interested in dissolving the line that separates installations and acoustic and robotic experiences, generating different kinds of pieces, from acoustic pieces to multimedia installations, from kinetic sculptures to artificial life systems.

José Manuel's dense artistic production is well documented and would not fit in this short space. We will limit ourselves to citing two more recent projects that he is busily working on. One is *Autofotóvoros*, which he will talk to us about personally during the interview; the other is *Sonidos en causa*, a collection of soundscapes connected to countries where the recent economical development has been growing rapidly.

This project took José Manuel and the Orquesta del Caos in the Amazon, documenting the changes of sound in the landscape starting from the city with a high demographic density and moving out further into more desolate areas, where only nature could be found. To avoid influencing the

animals' behaviour, our artists projected and installed some recorders on trees capable of resisting the weather conditions and documenting the sound life of places in total absence of human beings.

This project generated a rich archive of recordings described and available to whoever wishes to use them, and also plans other phases by installing microphones that allow for the transmission of sounds via streaming on the Internet.

But let's go back to the story of Berenguer and try to retrace his footsteps with him. It was the 70 s, machines and technology were far from being what they are today, but armed with his foundations in the scientific field and his unstoppable hunger for knowledge, José Manuel began his journey, which lead him to encounter characters of great importance, such as Luigi Nono.



Barbara Sansone e Jordi Salvadó: Talk to us about your relationship with Luigi Nono.

José Manuel Berenguer: Luigi Nono appeared in Sitges one day when I was 24 years old and we became friends, and he influenced me greatly with his way of thinking. We talked mostly about politics and philosophy rather than music (I do not define myself as one of his pupils). When I was granted a scholarship in Germany, I studied German, but then I got another scholarship in Bourges, France, and opted for that because I could already speak French. I got two jobs there: lecturer at the university and professor of electro-music at the conservatoire. Thanks to my earnings I often went to visit Luigi Nono in Freiburg and learnt a lot from him.

For Luigi the issue of lack of perfection in the score was important: the writing cannot say everything, it always presents some emptiness. And this idea was founded on the logical-philosophical Treaty by Wittgenstein, whose proposition 7.0 is renowned, and says that anything that cannot be talked about must be hushed. In other words, Nono talked about those things that language cannot transmit and thought that most of musical thought was not transferable from the point of view of writing.

This was one of the ideas that struck me the most at that time, because I was convinced that you could do practically anything with writing (I was 25 and had studied composition)

and because it opened up a path to a kind of sculptural work with electronic means. It presented the possibility of going beyond the mere definition of behaviour that should be followed in order, because that's what the score said, because the composer thought that. Now I could go into the sound as matter in a sensitive way, and to use a modern term, in an "interactive" way.

Barbara Sansone e Jordi Salvadó:As can be seen on your website, "interactivity" is one of those terms that you doubt...

José Manuel Berenguer: Yes, I would put it in inverted commas because interaction, from the point of view of plastic art, implies that there is an audience and that that audience transforms the piece. In this case I say interactive in the sense that the device is activated and the device responds quickly and in "real time". This was important for those who then went on to write the programs and those who created digital hardware: the devices must become capable of responding in real time, not just for the issue of interactivity that can be seen today in plastic art, but so that the response could be swift for what was being done.

Of course, up until the mid 90 s the issue of real time was really a dream: you had to write a program with a

language, like for example C, and you had to spend some hours filling it in. In the meantime you could read a book and when you heard what you had done you had already forgotten what it was you were doing in the first place.

This was one of the main objectives: that you could touch a button and that button would produce an effect that in some way was an immediate response. The thought of impossibility of writing everything with the means available in language is related to infinity, because writing or any other language is a discreet construction if anything, it jumps about, it doesn't continue and so the existence of infinity with which mathematicians work for their demonstrations (more useful in physics, for example, where it is the limit used to define trajectories, integrals and so forth), needs the idea of continuity, which is a hypothesis.

Today there are mathematicians who sustain that this hypothesis will be proved to be false. For the time being we work with this hypothesis and then we'll see, even if things will surely continue to function.

This issue is very important from a theoretical point of view and often it seems that theoretical issues aren't important in practical issues, like writing music. But the problem is that

over time there will be errors, and gross divergences between theory and practice and the final result will be that you will be doing music with serious ideological problems even if you don't want to accept that.

The fact is that in the beginning you try, it doesn't matter if you move away from the initial point, but in the end you find yourself going in a direction when you really wanted to go somewhere else. This often happens.



Barbara Sansone e Jordi Salvadó: This all happened up until 1987

José Manuel Berenguer: Yes, before I decided to go back to Barcelona for personal reasons and entered into the faculty of computer science, or rather the department of computer science of the science faculty, because a specific faculty did not exist yet. I finally began to learn about technical issues, which were very important to me because I needed to develop a discourse about contradiction and continuity and discontinuity, a

discourse founded in Maths and philosophy.

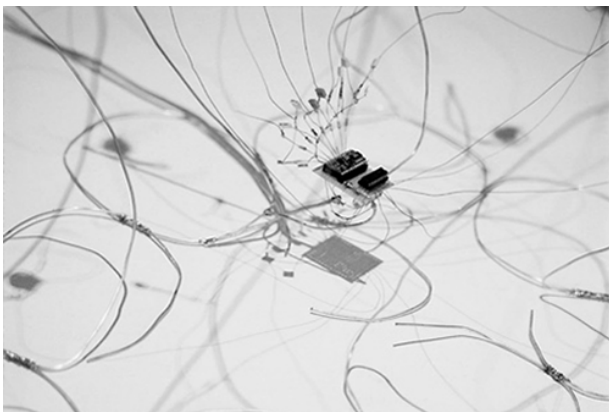
Along this path there were obviously machines, with their characteristics, and they were very interesting, they were useful for doing very specific things and therefore it was very important to know what the curve of response of each of them was, to know what could be done concretely with one or another.

Right now machines begin to function on their own, which is marvellous because you can forget about all that: you don't need to research too much, but you limit yourself to using the interface as a user and it's done. This is a great advantage because you have more time to dedicate to the concept, which is important. Most of all one of the problems that we still have in experimental art, in electronic art, is that we are still too limited when dealing with machines, hardware and software.

For this reason open sourcing is talked of a lot. My opinion is that it's not really important if you do it open, closed, hard or soft. The important thing is having a thought about things and to be able to mould and deepen this idea.

This easiness offered by machines that practically work on their own allows us to go further than was

initially thought possible. The machine by Luís Callejo had 4KB of RAM; my Mac has 4GB of memory and does not bother me, maybe just a little for the speed of the processor. I know the type and quantity of instructions that it can elaborate per second but really the architecture of the machine ceases to interest me, because what I see is that I connect devices, I launch applications and it does everything on its own. This allows me to dedicate more time to the artistic part.



This doesn't mean that it isn't important to have a foundation of how your instrument works. Pierre Schaeffer said: "Know your instrument". If you play the guitar you must know the physics of the strings, know the acoustics and know the wood.

If you work in electronics you must know the devices to know how far you can go and often many interesting pieces of work are created by forcing the machines so that they can go beyond what they are capable

of. Here serendipity comes into play, when you're working on the sensitive issue, because in reality you're working with things that come up, that were unforeseen.

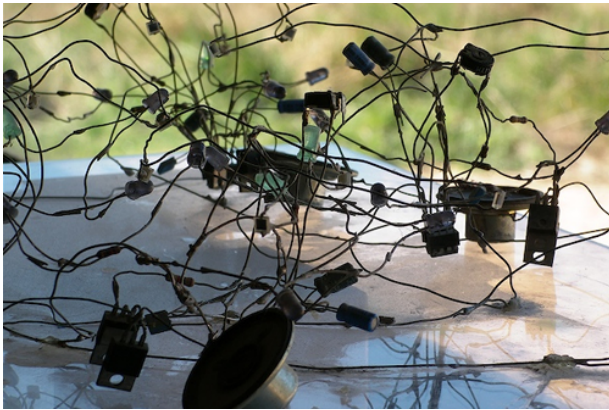
So you must have a foundation but then forget about it a little, so as to not remain attached to the issue, if not it's very difficult to get out of that situation. It's what happens when you study counterpoint for many years or harmony and at the end you only know how to do counterpoint and harmony exercises and that's dramatic. It's what happens to most composers.

The technique is very important but you must not get trapped by it: it will be a topos, but technique is important mostly in order to transcend it. What is interesting are the paths that people use to get over it, to acquire the domain of what is difficult to transmit with language.

In my case, as I hinted at, I tried to find catastrophes in the limits of the behaviour of machines. It is not my invention: there are many people who do so. I don't know if they express it in this way, but that's what it is.

Serendipity: you find yourself in a point that has nothing to do with the starting point, because you have made sure that the machine behaves chaotically and therefore unpredictably according to your

theory.



Barbara Sansone e Jordi Salvadó:

What you have said up until now mostly answers the next question, but we will ask you anyway because we are very interested in it. Your work presents a very solid philosophical foundation: how do you translate the thought, the concept that is behind artistic expression, what is the process that generates the work?

José Manuel Berenguer: Yes that is what we were talking about. In relation to the research of chaos in things, there are different factors that come together in my work. On the one side there is nature, which is a sort of interesting model that offers many starting points. Then there are devices. And then there is the artist, with his ideas.

What I observe in nature is that it is rich of things that are related in a sort of mesh, with simple units that are unified. For example, bees and ants: one alone is not so interesting, and presents a relatively simple behaviour,

but when there is a group then shapes begin to form.

Therefore the issue of a collective or great number of particles, that when unified create things that are not written by single individuals, is very present in my work. When I am doing granular synthesis of some material, the beauty outside is the unpredictability given by the fact that there's a great mass of individuals. When there are few, they present an easy behaviour that can be understood simply, but when there are many of them they generate productions that act upon me in an unexpected way.

This action upon me, on my perception, on my conscience, offers information to be able to choose the behaviour that I'm more interested in. But you'll notice that on one side there's this model of behaviour of masses in nature and on the other the treatment of the masses in an artificial way (to use a term that I'm not interested in but is needed in order for us to understand one another).

Therefore I listen, observe what happens with these algorithms and in the end I choose an absolutely arbitrary way. In other words, I do the opposite of what Cage did. I don't want to talk about how he worked, I think he's fantastic, I really admire his music and his way of thinking. But in

this case I don't use the case as he does.



In my thought process a very strong component is the philosophy of chance and there's a lot of evolutionary theory. I think that one of the genial ideas of Western thought was that of natural selection as an engine of evolution. On the one hand natural selection is more evident when there are masses of individuals who behave in a certain way and relate to a particular environment, on the other there's a question that has to do with natural selection and that is that I let these kinds of production grow in a medium which is my mind and this is what I am getting at.

I use my mind like an environment where I can let a series of perceptive or sensitive species live. Here there are species that evolve and others that devolve: some take shape, others don't. What influences this is the relationship between them.

Another thing that I see is very related to the issue of natural selection is the

idea of conflict. This has been taken from Luigi Nono, who was an avid dialectic materialist and said that conflict is the engine of the world, it is that which makes things possible, makes them evolve and stay in constant movement. He said it with a passion that really convinced you and I think that situations of conflict really do make us evolve.

When there are two perceptive species that get into conflict for something, it is there that interesting things happen: both can keep developing according to the dynamics of the system, or maybe disappear. This kind of thing is fundamental and basic in my way of making art.

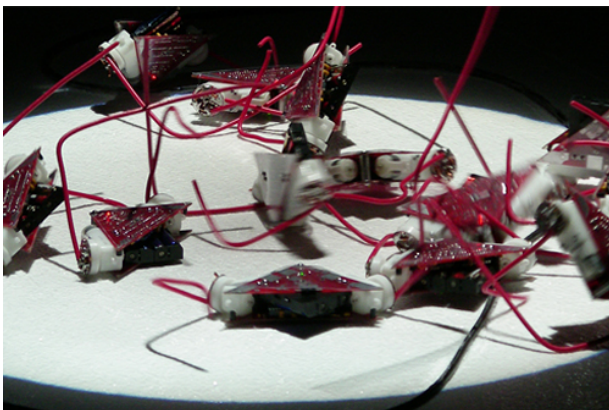
For example I put it as a manifesto of one of my pieces, the one about robots, Autofotóvoros. In this case it was a recreation of a situation of conflict where there were 21 equal elements in competition with one another not to obtain a greater dose of something, but for a purely systematic issue, because they ended up in the same place, looking for light.

This makes us think that violence is more systemic than ethic: violence exists because there are situations that bring violence, and if we are different in something compared to those little robots who argue between them until they break, till they "die", it is in knowing how to evaluate

systemic situations to avoid those points.

This work presents all of this, mostly the issue of conflict. There are currently 9 robots and 12 must be fixed. On my website there are videos of some of them, but I wanted to see what happened but putting together a greater number of them and to avoid riots I had to introduce a system that moved the light when the readings registered excessive gatherings, but often it was too late.

The work was presented in Vittoria, in the País Basco, and I really don't know why but the people of Krea made me make this work: they are fantastic people, who believed in my project from the very beginning and immediately agreed to produce it. But for me it was an experience



Barbara Sansone and Jordi Salvadó: So to recap, the fundamental issues of your work are evolution, masses and conflict.

José Manuel Berenguer: There is a

fourth one, in relation to these, which is the epiphenomenon, the idea that when there is a collective of individuals that do the same thing, unexpected phenomena arise from it. They are at the beginning, but for me they are important because these unexpected things create for you. They interest me because for many years (even if I know it's a utopia, that I'll never get there, because I don't know enough about it and because from a systemic point of view it's impossible)

I try to listen to myself, to see how I work from an artistic point of view and I try to mould this function with external machines. From here the idea of making machines, only to then tend to stop making them, to get to a kind of nirvana. I'm not Buddhist, but I understand the necessity of getting to nirvana sooner or later.

Barbara Sansone and Jordi Salvadó: And what do you say about the light? In your work and even in the sculptures that you have here in your home, it seems to be an ever-present element.

José Manuel Berenguer: Light and sound compliment each other. I know a lot about sound and little about light. Sound therefore bores me somewhat and light doesn't at all, because I have much to learn. For this reason I'm experimenting with light,

even if I'm conscious of the fact of the lack of my plastic work. I have experience as a user, I've seen a lot, but it's another thing to make sure that the formal aspect of what I'm doing is the most appropriate.

I think that this creates another kind of epiphenomenon, that is that the work grows and takes on a shape in function to what it does. This is the idea that is at the foundation of my electronic sculptures: shapes depend on how the electronic components are connected, that is the circuit cannot be in another way, the basic connections require a specific structure.

Barbara Sansone e Jordi Salvadó: How would you define the type of music you make? Before you used the term "experimental" or "electronic" but these define other things now, don't you think?

José Manuel Berenguer: I will answer you as I answered a 13 year old boy who asked me the same question a day after the concert at the Fundació Miró: I make the music that I want to (laughs). The fact is that I don't know, how would you define this music? I wouldn't define it in any way, because I don't have the perspective to answer.

There have been many attempts but it seemed that everyone sinned in

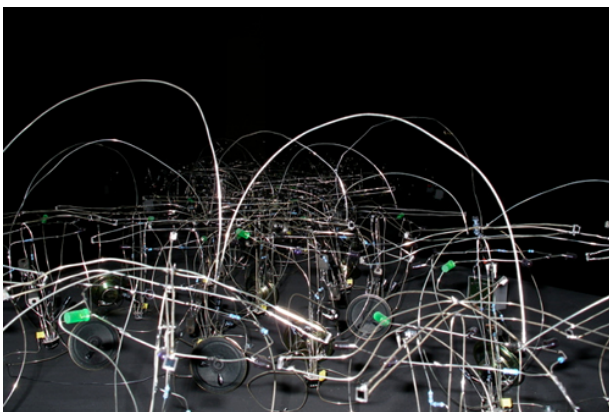
lacking historical perspective and in any case it was the music that I wanted to do, something that I did not invent (no one invents anything), but that I learnt by reading Edgar Varèse, who at a certain point in his life wrote in some of his writings: "I don't know if I'm making music or not, but I'm doing what I want". Aside from that what is the necessity to define something in one way or another, when what you're interested in is doing what you're doing, full stop? What is the necessity for so many denominations? It's a bourgeois reminiscence of a descendent from something.

It cannot be that you are doing just one thing, a definition risks becoming a manifesto, but it would be a tautology, because any music you make is a hybrid. A moment ago we were talking about evolution, right? Evolutions makes species need the maximum amount of hybridisation and genetic crossover in order to not reduce the spectrum of production. In music it's the same thing: all the descendents are nothing but sagas like The Lord of the Rings, cosmogonies, like our Christian one ("In the beginning was the word").

It seems that all these genealogies are nothing but justifications of power. Think of monarchies, which say that power comes from God, but who says that? The king himself! The problem is

that when God stops existing there's an enormous problem, because who gives authority to the powerful?

In music the same thing occurs: the creators need to affiliate to a determined extraction and in reality do not accept their freedom. Therefore things like people saying that Karlheinz Stockhausen or Pierre Henry are the godfathers of electronic music happen. Ok, but we must see what relationship there is between them and their music and what today can be defined as electronic. It's true that in the 50 s Stockhausen's music was defined electronic, but then the term moved onto another meaning, which is OK, because terms move, but it cannot be that for the sole problem of terminology a form of music is seen as a descendent of another when there are so many differences.



Barbara Sansone and Jordi Salvadó: There's a definition that we like more: "research music"

José Manuel Berenguer: Yes, I like that, but I would not only say research

music, but I would say research art, because I think that it's a way of making art. Research music, yes, people who are searching for things, who worry about searching rather than looking for a result that is always the same. Luigi Nono was very radical because of this.

He said that if you wanted to be an artist, you had to stop doing scores where everything was thought of, you had to surprise yourself with what you had written. If you weren't surprised it wasn't art. Joan Albert Amargós, who at the time was my professor and a very talented composer, disagreed entirely. But Nono said: "If you know exactly how it will sound, what are we talking about? Avant-garde? What avant-garde?"

It's not about going further but rather going somewhere else, not of growing (evolution is not a line that point upwards, but shows a composed flow of uncontrolled highs and lows) but exploring new places. It's not progress, but making sure that things are always fresh. In my opinion there is an art (and a music) that can withstand the idea of the cultural industries and another that cannot, because it is an art that is a "waste of time", that uses all of your creative capacity to do "research" in a rigorous way. And this is related to the necessity for an economical support from cultural departments in various

countries.

Barbara Sansone and Jordi Salvadó: Is that offered here is Catalonia?

José Manuel Berenguer: Not at all. Here there's CONCA (Consell Nacional de la Cultura i de les Arts), that would like to be a support organisation, but it has little funds. In my opinion politicians have created it to free themselves of pressure from artist associations, for the issue of the democratisation of art.

The real interest comes from cultural industries, like the ICIC (Institut Català d'Indústries Culturals). At the moment all the musical issues have been

transferred to the ICIC. In France there were 5 important research groups but now that France is a country that is entering into a more exacerbated neo-liberalism they are disappearing.

In December we attended a sound art festival called Zeppelin, and the themes this year were fear and power, and we had a chance to listen to some work from the participants in octophony in two spaces of the CCCB, the auditorium and the hall. Did all of the authors have all the necessary elements to produce their work (like 8 speakers and matrixes for the distribution of signals)?



Some did and some didn't. For example Ignasi Álvarez from Telenoika worked in stereo, imagining how the work would sound like on 8 speakers, and obtained a good result.

Octophony is a standard in studies where research music is created, but it's not the only one: there are other systems where a greater number of speakers are used (from 16 to 400 or more). The issue is multi-focus: in reality sounds do not come from in front of us, but surround us.

John Cage in Roaratorio said that we must listen to the forest, where you have no idea of what's ahead of you and what's behind you, and everything is produced around you. To reproduce this situation there are different solutions: for example Canadians, Americans and Germans tend to opt for square environments with speakers that surround the listener completely, which was the idea that Stockhausen had for The Universal Exposition in Osaka.

An important concept is the fact that

we must not consider the speakers as sources of sound but as musical instruments, like devices that allow us to use the reflections in spaces where the music is presented, because the spaces are never neutral and vibrate differently. Another concept that is interesting is the necessity to deprive the musician of the role of "officiate" on the scene to offer the public a listening zone where they can enjoy complete freedom of movement.

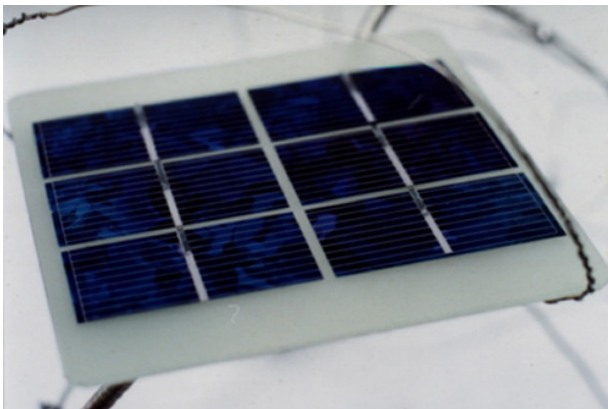
Barbara Sansone and Jordi Salvadó:

Talking about listening and spaces, how is it possible that musicians work on a stage with a monitoring system and not in the centre of the room where there's a concert, where more often than not very different things happen than what is being heard on the stage, because of the acoustics of the space and the amplifying system directed at the audience?

José Manuel Berenguer: I ask myself the same thing and I suppose it's because of a lack of education to listening. A piece that is created at home with a couple of speakers will never be the same as when it is reproduced on a big system and in a determined acoustic space and this is the same as a loss of data in what is being given to the audience. With time and with different acoustic "failures" you learn that it's important that the piece doesn't only sound good at home, but also sounds good

in the place where it will be played and often people have little experience in this.

The musician must learn to move away from the monitor and consider the space where he is performing, the amplifying system and the sound technician to be part of his instrument. The sound technician does not only have a technical role, as people often think, but is in fact the person who works on respecting the fidelity of the piece and that makes aesthetical decisions in the space where it is being reproduced.



Barbara Sansone e Jordi Salvadó:

Exactly: this happens in plastic art as well. A sculptor does not limit himself to creating the work, but must also preoccupy himself with how to show it to the public, the context and conditions of where he will display it. But we interrupted you.

José Manuel Berenguer: Yes, I was saying that in general people don't listen enough. And not in a global way, because we search for meaning,

we are convinced that sounds point at a determined source and that is partly true, but it doesn't matter where they come from. The important thing is the experience of these sounds. It's an aesthetic leap that is not easy to take in society and even less in the political world.

We are used to a frontal distribution system from our school days where a person is up in front and talking to you. Nowadays shows have the same philosophy, with a stage in front, and for the music industry it's unthinkable to propose a different format. This is like putting the brakes on new ways of listening. Take a politician, put him in the centre of a sound space that surrounds him, ask him to listen: if you can keep him there for long enough he might start to realise what's happening around him and he will surely be surprised.

But in the beginning, without a consciousness of this kind of listening, he will not notice anything and so it will be difficult for him to understand and support this new way. Politicians normally move for quantifiable arguments and music isn't one of them: that's why they aren't interested. Music and art are characterised by other things that cannot be said or read and so they must be transmitted via empathy. And here we go back to the Wittgenstein proposition that I cited

earlier.

<http://www.sonoscop.net/jmb/>

<http://sonoscop.net/sonoscop/orquestradelcaos.html>

<http://sonoscop.net>

<http://rwm.macba.cat/>

Work

Zoe Romano



It has been almost three years since the publication of *Produttori di Stile*, the notebook reporting the results of a research financed by Provincia di Milano about working practices and flexibility in a number of fashion houses in Milan. At the time we witnessed the presentation (<http://www.serpicanaro.org/features/produttori-di-stile>) during which authors and promoters, among the other things, underlined how 8 out of 10 contracts, in all the major business companies of such field/section/area, were atypical (cocopro, interns, fake VAT number recordings etc); this not as a response to production peaks, but as basic structural resource, as a far from being atypical

strategy/procedure of human resources management.

They were also recognizing that figures provided by Osservatorio del Mercato del Lavoro (Working Market Observatory) were not sufficient to investigate the phenomenon as a whole, since statistics on “independent” working practices, as well as consultants, internships, causal collaborators, are not a systematically and officially data collected by the institutions.

During that presentation we realized that the speakers were facing a peculiar kind of “submerged”, not actually referring to the fashion production in its material side, but rather focusing on everything concerning fashion’s “immaterial” production. They weren’t reading it under this light, though. They were in fact depicting those people who create brand identities, advertising, write for niche magazines, realize events, take photos, manage informative fluxes as “highly qualified” professionals. implicitly comparing them to those super-paid consultants and multiclents, the kind

you could find in 80 s in Milan, but doesn't exist anymore.

In that moment we didn't have any statistics or researches proving this, but Serpica Naro's experience on field during these last years, having spoken to a thousand people, getting emails and confidences from every kind of worker of the branch, offered us a privileged point of view which made some of the conclusions reported by the speakers clash, especially in respect of everything concerning the immaterial valorization of fashion and workers.



Last year the occasion came to dig deeper in this matter, starting a collaboration with Adam Arvidsson, professor of Sociology of Globalization at the Department of Politics Sciences of Milan. Together with him, we created a work-team composed by advertisers and communicators, academics,

independent researchers, economists, experts in labour law and students which we called Milan Urban Research (Ricerca Urbana Milano, <http://www.ricercaurbanamilano.com/>), with a mutual aim: to question over oneself and the environment.

We started from the remark that in Italy, as well as in the rest of Europe, since quite a long time it is spoken of "creative industries" and "creative and cognitive work" as important sources for economic and social growth. In Milan, especially, this issue has become crucial for the economy of the city and its cultural life, basis of fashion and design industries. For this reason we reckoned it would become necessary to know closely the problems of creative work, particularly in fashion businesses.

The first research would have had the aim to bring into focus the perspectives, ideas, working conditions, the relations with firms and the roles of creativity in the creation of economic value in Milan and in its province.

We titled it The highly Qualified-The first urban research on creative fashion work in Milan . This work would have also been useful as first step of a wider research, begun last year within the EduFashion European project (<http://www.edufashion.org>), financed with the backing of European Union in the Life Long

Learning program, and of which we will tell better during next year.

In this article I will try to summarize how we developed the research and its main outcomes, which you can examine entirely downloading it from the Ricerca Urbana Milano website, either in English or Italian.



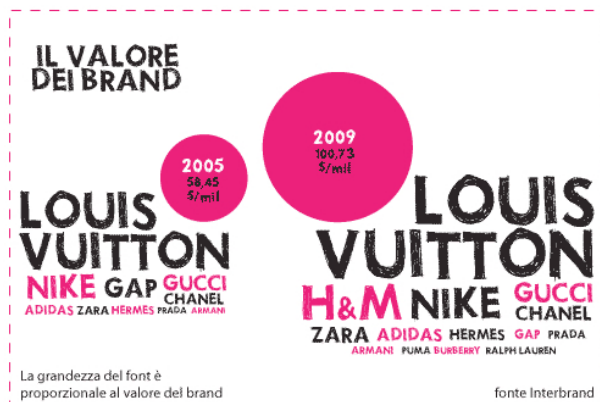
The investigation begun with some qualitative interviews with workers of the fashion industry, selected through our network of acquaintances, who furnished us with further contacts for the next interviews. In the second phase we prepared an online poll to be spread out through Facebook and the distribution of about a thousand leaflets during the fashion week. The questions we were asking focused on subjective experience of creative work, trying to understand not only what kind of employment was being brought on, but most of all, what exactly daily activities consisted in.

During these weeks we also organized some public seminars, inviting academics and professionals in order to present some analysis on fashion environment, followed by discussions within which we were sharing impressions about the first partial results that helped us to direct our interpretation in the best way possible.

For instance, it is interesting to show how different studies underline how from the end of the '90s there has been a continuous transfer of worth going on from the tangible production of clothing towards the immaterial production of design and communication., which brought to a consequent modification in typologies of working positions within Milan province. Employees in clothing production are continuously decreasing in number, whereas workers whose job consists in the creation of image, advertising, communication, events, turning Milan in one of the world's major fashion display-windows.

This variation is to be related to the brandisation of fashion houses, which shifted from a business model based on the care for consumers' tastes, to one aimed to accumulate long-term profits working on the coherence and diffusion of their brand and putting worth in it producing accessories at affordable prices for a consistently

bigger population of fashion victims. The results of such a strategy didn't take long to come out, Italian major fashion brands have doubled their worth in 4 years period only, from 2004 to 2008.



Instead, economic figures furnished by firms are not similar to our interviewees' economic conditions. In fact, the greater part of them are generally underpaid, have temporary contracts, and are working more than 8 hours per day. The number of those who have Open-ended contracts does not reach the 10% of the whole and the most common type of relations with the employer is the project-based contract, which average length is usually less than one year. The ones that are not under project-based contracts belong to those second generation's autonomous workers (http://impresa-stato.mi.camcom.it/im_46/bologna.htm), namely the by

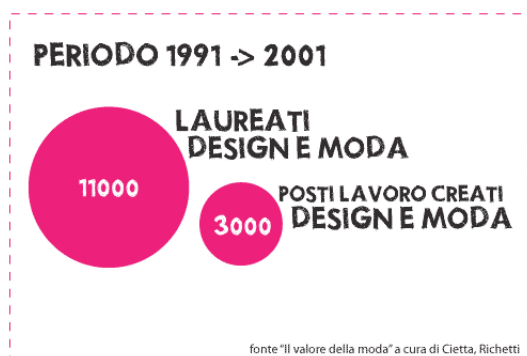
now common and well known "fake VAT numbers".

With these words, one of our interviewees reflects on his position: "My wish is that the precarious jobs in my area are positive in the sense that accumulating many experiences as this one in the course of time I sincerely hope to get -maybe in ten years time- to get a CV that is suitable for a responsibility role that might surely keep the creative side intact but maybe might as well give an economic stability that would allow me to be autonomous oh God, I basically just told you that I'm already unconsciously resigned to be a temporary-contract worker until I'm thirty-five."

Average wages are about 1150 euros and do not go over 1500 euros even when they get older. Under thirties average earnings woefully remain under 1000 euros. To this has to be added that more than the half complains about delays in payments and had to rely on parents for an economic support during the last two years: "Come on, let's say it, you don't need to be a genius to get this, none of us lives on this work only, everyone's helped out by family and for what concerns me, I also collaborate with a newspaper and supplement my income giving lessons to some students. I don't know exactly how things are set in other

editorial offices, but in general you don't really get to see many rich journalist, do you."

However, whilst the ones who answered to our polls and interviews tend to define their job as autonomous and creative and to consider themselves fulfilled (75%!), if we have a look on the concreteness of their experience, it comes out a rather different state of things. Autonomy is very circumscribed; employers pretend total obedience during the working-day (which often is the working-night as well), shifts times are variable and prolonged and they have scarce control over it " There's one guideline, the image is given to every shop in the same way, namely if in (via) Montenapoleone it is decided that from the 15th to the 25th of February display-windows must show that item, you'll find the same one all over the world, New York, Tokyo, Paris, Abu Dhabi, it will always be the same one, for that period of time. This is about display-windows as well as the inside exposition."



The most relevant discover of this research is the fact that working in this field is constantly and pervasively evaluated not in monetary terms. While most of interviewed university students claim to be very satisfied about their job, the same percentage is deeply unsatisfied about salaries and working schedules but this data does not affect the image of the profession in its complex. A great amount of the gratification seems to come from feeling "creative" and part of a particular creative scene: "I keep staying in this field because I like it, I have my own projects which I'd like to accomplish. I also think that waking up every morning happy about going to work, do something that you like it's great. I still have to settle but I hope for the best, even if the future seems to darken".

What explanation could we find to this phenomenon? The answer that we chose focuses on three main dynamics of a more complicated phenomenon which we call Ideology of Creatività (Ideologia della Creatività), which on one hand exalts a lifestyle devoted to self fulfillment through the usage and participation to a gentrified urban scene. On the other hand it produces the lack of a true alternative to this ideology. The reason for this lack could be explained

through the same bradization process which subsumes, with growing rapidity, every autonomous form of social effervescence which has always been the base for alternative lifestyles.

Working in the fashion field means being almost totally absorbed by that world, this concerning the investment of working time as well as maintaining social relations that allow to keep having a job. It is easy to get to the point in which the product of value corresponds to the production of one's individuality and workers are absorbed in it to the point of being virtually unable to imagine anything

else or to even have the actual time to build up another one (about 70% declares not to have enough money to have a family or time for political/social activities).

The "passion" for one's work and the constant pursuit of self-fulfillment through work hence become a mean of productiveness for informational capitalism, through which brands are produced, the city is gentrified and workers are not perceived as such but turn into atomized individuals constantly seeking for confirmation of their being creative.

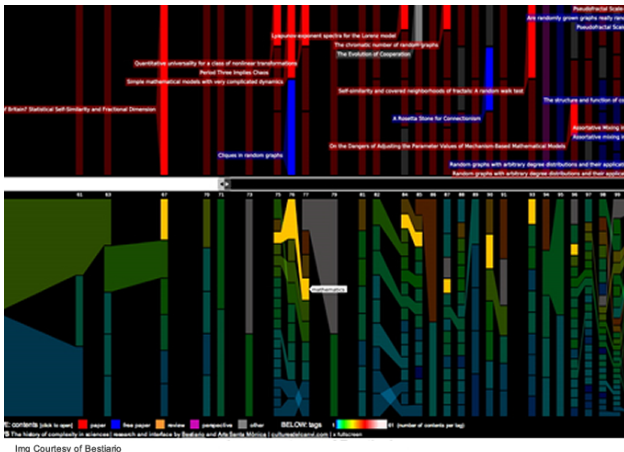


“In the beginning everything is so like ‘wow finally I can’t believe it’ then you realize that you’re the one who’s exploited by everyone, anyway, because they always give you the most boring work to be done.

Because it’s true that the bottom low is from where we all have to start and me I’m the first one who says: ok cool, I just got out from university as untouched and full of theory as you see me, I don’t know how to do anything so fair enough. But after three years you notice that this thing actually bothers you. Especially because I work a lot more than my boss. My boss is almost never there, he just does briefs with journalists, stays there for a couple of minutes and then he’s gone. For the rest, nobody would be working if I wasn’t there”.

Art Tech Media 2009. Sci-fi Journey Between Science and Culture

Barbara Sansone



After a year of intense activity, including Espacio Enter in Tenerife in September, the European Congress at the Guggenheim in Bilbao in October, the continuation of project emc27 and the preparation of an experimental research centre also in Tenerife, and some other art projects in progress (not least the forthcoming further edition of the Nomadas project), the tireless Montse Arbelo and Joseba Franco concluded their 2009 with panache in Barcelona with the II International Art Tech Media Congress.

The themes of this event were innovation, networks and the new media in relation to culture and social development. As always, the aim of Art Tech Media is to bring together people coming from areas relating to

different subjects concerned with science, art and technology, to take stock of the situation based on the present and near future developments and to stimulate research and the creation of areas of convergence.

This effort, by no means insignificant, explains and in some ways justifies the diversity of proposals and interventions, which were presented to the audience from December 18th to 21st, in part at the Auditorium of Barcelona Activa and others at the charming Baró de Quadras Palace, seat of Casa Asia. Both the places have a profound connection with the themes proposed, as underlined by their representatives during the conferences.



Img Courtesy of Art Tech Media

Barcelona Activa (<http://www.barcelonactiva.cat/>), represented by Montse Basora, the director of the CreaMedia Project during the event, is the local development agency of the City of Barcelona. Among other activities, it proposes itself as an incubator of companies offering support and training, initiatives and talents.

Casa Asia (<http://www.casaasia.es/>), represented by the director of culture and exhibitions Gras Menen, is instead a center particularly focused on the contemporary artistic events taking place in the Asian countries. It tries to encourage the creation of points of contact with the West. On Saturday and Sunday, Casa Asia hosted the screening of the winning projects which received awards at the Japan Media Arts Festival in Tokyo. Some of them, like the excellent *A Child's Metaphysics* by Koji Yamamura, *Dreams of Kudan*, or *Arai Chie Kimura Taku*, are available online on the website of the festival.

For the first day of lectures by Art Tech Media 2009, the main subject was a reflection on the relationship not yet sufficiently defined between science and art. The two areas are closely linked. They have always been and they are so in an even more profound way in recent times. But apparently science is still a world that seems reserved to a select few. It

seems something in relation to which the majority feel entitled to maintain a certain level of ignorance. For this reason it is becoming necessary to organize outreach activities which can be integrated within the educational structures.

A person who is working on this, for example, is Josep Perelló, physicist and university professor, currently in charge of the scientific department of the Santa Monica in Barcelona Arts Center, which, with the help of the renowned group Bestiario di Santiago Ortiz, is developing *Cultures del canvi*, the first interdisciplinary online project of the Centre which allows the visualization of scientific data and the relationships between concepts.

Pau Alsina is also involved in this project. He is another professor at the University Oberta de Catalunya. He comes from studies on history and theory and he is now interested in the relationship between art, science and technology, with the aim of creating cultural ecosystems. Pau is also the director of the very interesting online magazine Art Nodes, available in Catalan, Spanish and English



And yet another professor, Oscar García, director of the official creation, design and media engineering Master at La Salle Business Engineering School of Barcelona, underlined the necessity of taking into account the new variables in the process of learning and asking the necessary questions which allow students and educational facilities to enable the training of the new professional profiles which are required by the most important companies in an International official document, where the multimedia profile is now an explicit element.

And, talking about disclosure, what deserved significant attention was the intervention by Laura M. Lechuga, who among her various roles, is a founding member of Sensia, a company which is trying to bring innovation in the scientific field into the market; not an easy undertaking, at least in Spain. Laura explained in very clear and simple words some of the complex concepts which lie behind the word “nanotechnology”. A word very fashionable today, but probably not exactly understood by the majority.

Basically, nanotechnology is made up of design, manufacture and the application of materials and systems in atomic and molecular scale. Working at this level, it is possible to intervene on the properties of the

materials and this is what makes possible the existence of fabrics which do not get creased or stained, glass which does not get dirty, it is what enables us to make bicycles, tennis rackets or aircraft which are more resistant and lighter. Consequently applications can be of any type: for example in the fields of electronics, cosmetics, energy, transport.

But the field where we see the greatest innovation is medicine. Nanotechnology is translating into reality the fantastic journey of Isaac Asimov. Their aim is to create more targeted treatments that have no side effects, tiny subcutaneous devices capable of diagnosing infections and cancers at the moment of their appearance, bio-sensors to be installed in emergency rooms, medical surgeries and to be kept ready at home, which are capable of providing a complete health check up. And, to link her speech to a subject so steeped in art, Laura showed some beautiful pictures revealing the beauty which can be discovered under a microscope. A quick Google search allows us to find a lot of information on this subject which we could define science-fiction.



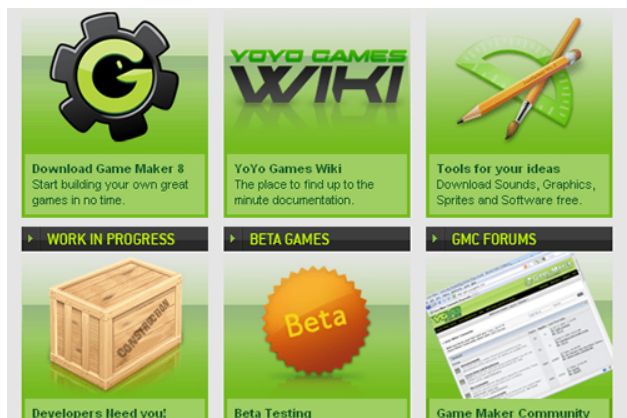
Art Tech Media has seen some artists among its guests. Among others, Multitouch Barcelona, already interviewed by our magazine and who recently appeared in ArtFutura 2009; José Manuel Berenguer, who we interviewed for this issue of Digimag, and one of those most appreciated by the Congress and by the Catalan contemporary Centers: Marcel · li Antúnez Roca. In addition to travelling around the world with his installations, performances and interactive conferences, Marcel · li is now dealing with the refinement of Pol, a platform on which he has been working for several years and which allows the interaction between various types of hardware and software with the aim of letting it become an open-source project.

The second and last day of lectures before the “gran finale” with a welcome cocktail offered by Casa Asia, saw the presentation of various projects, often accompanied by video projections, including the festival The influencers with Bani Brusadin, DiBa with Alexis Borràs , ArtFutura with Montxo Algora, both always followed closely by Digicult; the well-known blog We-Make-Money-No-Art by the nice Regine Debatty, Balzac TV with Héctor Milla, an online webshow project based on the concepts of ubiquity, quality, symmetry and sociality; the Càpsula project with Ulla Taipale, a project of which Monica Bello is a co-founder and which tries to find the connection between art, science and nature with a series of curious projects in close connection with flowers and animals; Oxercars / EXGAE with Simona Levi and Compartir dona gustet with Marc Sempere, both dedicated to the free culture.

<http://www.artechmedia.net/>

Women In (video)game. Gender Ludic Culture

Gigi Ghezzi



On 25-26 March at the University of Bradford in England, it will take place the 7th meeting of the convention Women in Games

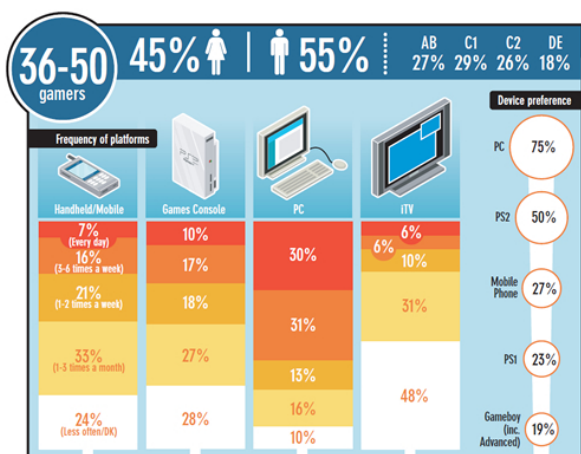
(<http://www.womeningames.com>).

This meeting is hosted every year by different contexts and during its life it emerged as one of the most important in the female world of videogame research and industry.

However the meeting doesn't gather only professional female characters, but also video player-women, because Women in Games has become an important discussion forum on modern trends and on future game studies scenarios, where a new academic world studying the sociological implications of videogames has got in direct contact with production companies. For this reason and in view of the future edition, "Digital Creativity" magazine

dedicate its last edition completely to the meeting (volume 20, issue 4, December 2009), publishing again some of the most original studies of the videogame female world. It is worth to say that the organizer and supporter of the event is Mark Eyles, videogame lector and designer at the Department of Creative Technologies of the University of Portsmouth. He has been following the convention since its first edition which took place in Portsmouth on 2004.

The female presence in the public of English video players was measured for the first time through a BBC survey (http://open.bbc.co.uk/newmediaresearch/files/BBC_UK_Games_Research_2005.pdf) titled "Digital Players and Digital Lifestyles". The studied sample was made up of 3442 English videogame players. The main questions were about playing methods, times and places, on whether they use the TV as console monitor, on the micro social playing context, on the impact on games by other medias such as radio, TV, mobile phone, on the games themselves and eventually on the value they give to the time spent while playing.



An important result in line with the subject *Women in Games* is that the female percentage of video players is only a little bit lower than the male one. However the representatives of the female “workforce” suffer a great delay (12%). Although the study may suffer the past time, the great success of social networks (Web 2.0) which appeal to an inclusivist rather than exclusivist logic allows to assume that the percentage of female video players has not decrease but maybe increased.

The increase has been registered not only with regard to the time reserved to the digital world, but also with regard to our imagination linked to it, above all concerning videogames, which represent while functioning a perfect synthesis of digital technologies and creativity. They rarely represent a mere digital experience: the importance of the game for the human development at every age makes the videogames a creative-ludic opportunity as well as a

possible incentive for the collective imagination, a multiplier of social models and, alas, a repeater of stereotypes and barriers like those based on gender differences.

This happens because unfortunately videogames do not escape strongly sexualized cultural-ludic representations: shadow-women or large-breasted women waiting for their liberation by a dominant man or strongly masculinized women full of weapons and martial arts masters such as those women listed by the design advisor **Corvus Elrod** in his *Semionaut's Notebook*

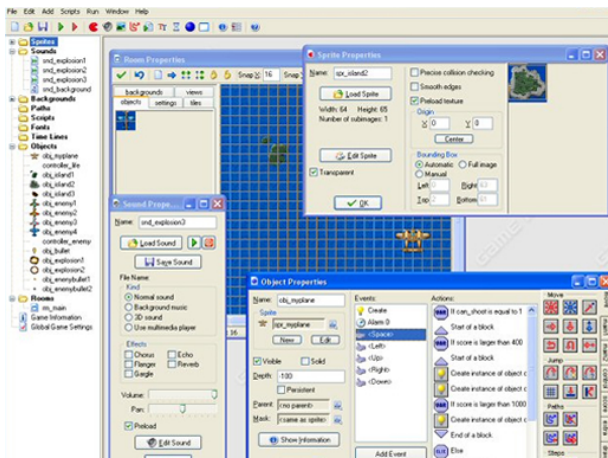
(<http://corvus.zakelro.com/gender-studies-list/>).

Those people who want to oppose gender barriers must consider also videogames as a digital capital in order to suggest gender reconfiguration models able to influence entire generations with respect to the elimination of situations of disparity in gender.

People must therefore support with enthusiasm and repeat in different contexts events like the *Game4girls*

(<http://cs.illinois.edu/outreach/games4girls>) organized by the Department of Computer Science at the University of Illinois, which involved in the videogame representation also middle-aged women attending the

university, in order to clamp down on the increase of gender differences in the videogame field.



The call for bids was directed not only to particularly skilled (female) developers, since people had to use the platform Game Maker (<http://www.yoyogames.com/>). The final works have been judged by a jury of girls attending the college or the university and who were most trained in using videogames.

It is worth to underline that above all developers and production companies must offer an inclusive and pluralist imagination as well as a choral quality of the characters and adventures that has to be useful for the future of humanity. The widespreading of roles and representations is also an economical issue for companies which look for niches of potential and inert players: a virtuous circle of activation of a still not existing public whose involvement allows the ripening of videogame expressive forms.

In the modern global culture – characterized by the adoption speed of digital technologies – a must is (and has to remain) the inclusive imperative which stands out for its high population representativity, also and above all in those situations where ludic technologies are used.

Journalism Is A Process, Not A Product. An Interview With David Cohn From Spot.us

Simona Fiore

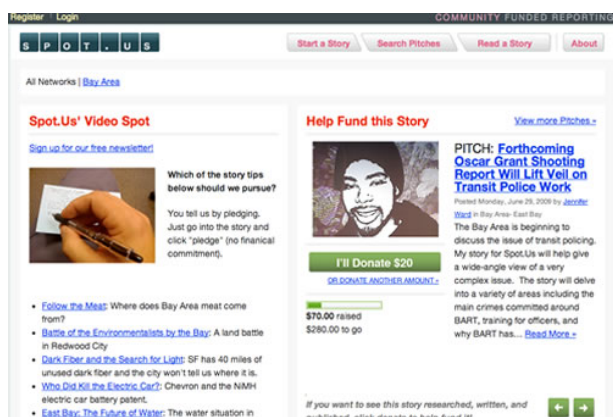


American Journalist, 27 years old, David Cohn started off as a freelance writing also for Wired, Seed Magazine, Columbia Journalism Preview. As editor at newassignment.net he took care of a project focused on *citizen journalism*. He organizes, on account of Buzzmachine.com, his first *Networked Journalism Summit* which had the purpose of gathering all the best practices and professionals of online journalism. He also worked for Broowaha, wide network of citizen journalism and now he works in Oakland, near San Francisco.

David's professional background surely played an important part in ideating and creating Spot.us, a *crowdfunding journalism* project to support local and investigative

journalism, started in 2008. The web platform established itself and grew with great success last year, also thank to the 340.000 dollars financing from the United States' organization Knight Foundation. Spot.us allows the freelance journalists to show projects to the public, that, if interested, can finance it by donating up to 20% of the total project whole cost.

This project is very interesting because it represents one of the possible paths practicable by journalism in the future. As a matter of fact it mixes professional journalism with local information: it revalue the professional figure of the journalist, remarking the responsibility which distinguishes his job, in relation both to the contents that it produces and to the public, and it gives value to the news that are not taken into consideration by traditional medias. The one way and elitary communication, proper of traditional journalism is overturned because the journalist, through the web platform, has a chance to "present his "pitch" to the whole world, directly involving the public".



At the basis of Spot.us there is the core concept in which David strongly believes, according to which journalism is a process and not a product, characterized by a highly participatory nature. This is what we spoke about in the following interview, about the birth of Spot.us and of journalism's future..

Simona Fiore: Spot.us is a project based on the phenomenon of crowdfunding journalism: could you explain me what is this about and then in detail talk about your project?

David Cohn: Spot.us is trying to pioneer what I call *community funding reporting*, which is the act of distributing a cost of hiring a reporter across a (lot of different people) network of people. So, there are a lot of journalism project that try to distribute the workload like *citizen journalism* or distributing reporting or *crowdsourcing*, and this is *crowdfunding*; so we're not distributing the workload. The workload is on few individuals, but

trying to distribute the financial load.

Simona Fiore: From where did the idea of creating a project to sustain local and investigative journalism come from?

David Cohn: The idea comes from two places: the first place is that I was a freelance reporter myself and the system seems some antiquated, because I had to pitch one person or I had to pitch the editor and I had to do via one to one communication, I couldn't pitch many editors, or pitch the world or pitch the audience, so this is one part. The other part is that I was a research assistant for a guy named Jack Howell who claimed the phrase *crowdsourcing* and he was working on his blog and I am his research assistant and I started researching *crowdfunding* on site like kiwi.org donor's choose and those are obviously big inspirations for crowdfunding.



Simona Fiore: Which are the issues and stories people are generally more interested in and for which they are

willing to pay?

David Cohn: I think all of them. What I say is that, you know, everybody is passionate about something. Maybe you have passion for, I don't know, go-kart racing, whatever you're passion about, that might be the thing you want to see written about. I think that everybody has a passion about something, so everybody is unique. I do see that environmental stories have a little bit more impact and, also, I say while everybody has a passion about something not every reporter who pitches about a topic does a good job of it.

I've seen people pitch things in a bad way, and of course if it's a bad pitch it doesn't matter if it's something I'm interested or not because I'm not going to support it. So, an example of a bad pitch was that we had one reporter that wanted to look into the psychological impact of being laid off. Right.

And that might be an interesting topic, the psychological impact to be laid off. But the pitch was that she was going to talk to a psychologist and talk to experts, and just what will come off is I know the psychologists are going to say, and experts are going to say, they are going to say it sucks, and that doesn't really have value to me, so why would I support it, even if I am really interested in

psychology or whatever it is. The people who will pay for and that will contribute to anything they believe in, but have you pitched right?

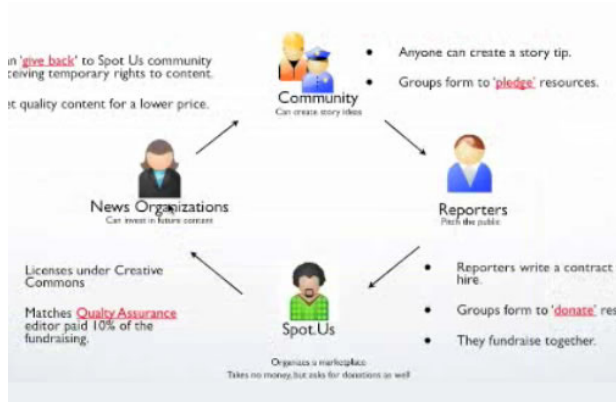
Simona Fiore: How many stories have been published during the last year?

David Cohn: I think we have forty or forty-one, and those are not necessarily stories, they're projects. So, some of our project consisted of thirty or forty stories, so that is a thing to consider. One of our projects was covering the city hall, the city budget of San Francisco, and that project consisted of 30 stories.

Simona Fiore: You stated that : "Journalism is not a product but a process and that journalism is participatory" What did you mean by that?

David Cohn: Sure, this is just the idea that journalism is a product not a process. So, newspapers are a product and what we should be concerned about is not saving newspaper but concerned about saving journalism, or that this is the idea, that journalism will survive newspapers. Some newspapers is a specific product are one thing, but journalism is a process of a series things you do. If you are to define journalism, the way I define journalism, that it is a series of things one does to get information; and, that

should be participatory, it's just this notion that the public be involved should be not behind a closed wall.



Simona Fiore: What will be, in your opinion, the relation between traditional journalism and crowdfunding journalism?

David Cohn: I think they will work together, I think they are supposed to work together. I don't think one replaces the other. I don't know how/what that relationship looks like in the future, but I do think that it's a relationship.

Simona Fiore: Do you reckon that a project such as Spot.us could

represent the Journalism of the Future?

David Cohn: It is one of the way, it is not the way. So it's not a saving grace, it is not going to replace news organization, it is not going to be an entire person's career, but it is part of the future of journalism.

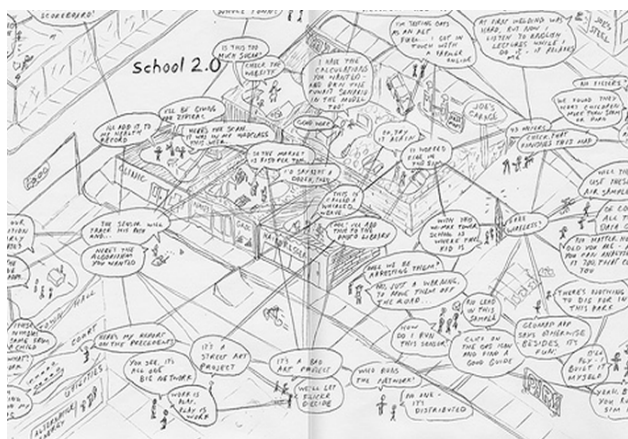
Simona Fiore: In which way could crowdfunding journalism help the local journalists community?

David Cohn: Well, it could help fund their work. That is the whole point of it, right! I think it also forces them to be little more accountable to the public, so they have to work a little bit harder in some respect, they are more accountable in the journalism they produce and they produce better journalism as a result. So, there is a lot of different things going on there.

<http://www.spot.us/>

Connectivism and Open Education. Education Of The Future

Simona Fiore



“A property of one entity must lead to or become a property of another entity in order for them to be considered connected; the knowledge that results from such connections is connective knowledge”. This is the epistemological principle of connectivism about which [George Siemens](#) connectivist theorist at the Manitoba University talks about in his book titled Knowing Knowledge (Knowing Knowledge – George Siemens. 2006).

The connectivism is based on the concept that learning is a network forming process, founded on the principles of diversity, autonomy, interactivity and openness. It promotes a holistic approach that evaluates the broadest spectrum of points of view linked to knowledge: it

considers knowledge as the result of an interaction among members involved in the learning process and is based on a mechanism which supposes an open system, disposed to comparison and interaction with different perspectives.

The digital evolution has brought essential changes at social, political and cultural level which involved also knowledge and learning that began to play a fundamental role in our information era. The study of the implications that the passage from capitalism to a knowledge society meant for the educational world, as well as for the teachers and students' role is essential in this moment in order to make the learning process coming into a line with the needs of our continuously changing society.

This is right the aim of connectivism
as Siemens himself asserts:

“Connectivism is a theory describing how learning happens in a digital age. (...) How does learning change when knowledge growth is overwhelming and technology replaces many basic tasks we have previously performed?”



Img Courtesy of Manitoba University

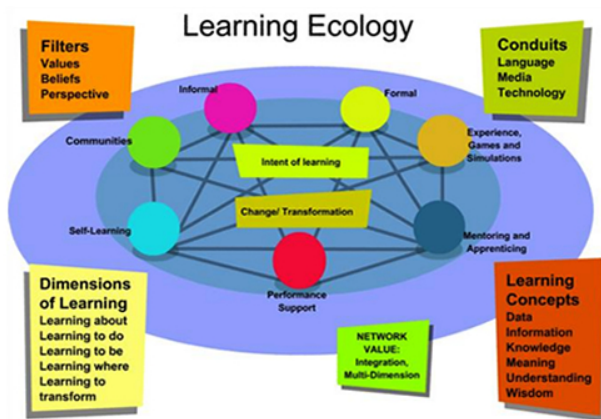
The 2.0 web with its democratic, open and social structure highly contributed to the learning change, making this process active and interactive. We are in the co-creation and content condision era, thank to forums, wikis, blogs, social networks. To keep thinking to knowledge and learning as ready-made products is quite obsolete in this context. They are rather constant processes in everybody's life and they both result from connections: "The connections that enable us to learn more are more important than our current state of knowing."

Social tools in this environment become therefore sense making spaces. Taking again cue from [George Siemens](#)'s words: "Individuals who read blogs often rely on feed readers (aggregator software which "visits" the blogs an individual has subscribed to, and returns any changes since the last visit). Feed readers permit individuals to follow dozens (even hundreds) of blogs. While the blogs

selected are important to the reader, the real point of value rests on the creation of a personal learning network. The aggregated network of blogs and other news sources is the key element in learning a framework for participatory sense making and network filtering (Image 12) - not the content experienced at a particular time". (Handbook of Emerging Technologies for Learning - George Siemens & Peter Tittenberger - March 2009).

In light of these changes, what will be the future of education? The dynamic approach to technological evolution will be essential because it is the result of the awareness that the tools used today in the learning process may be no more valid in the future and therefore replaced by more innovative ones.

The teacher's figure will probably assume the more democratic role of "learning curator" and will acknowledge students' autonomy but at the same time understand their frustration in exploring unknown areas without maps.



A curator is an expert teacher who instead of dealing out knowledge, creates spaces in which such knowledge can be created, explored and connected, replacing therefore the old concept of a class pivoted around the teacher, as again the American theorist suggests: “While learners are free to explore, they encounter displays, concepts, and artefacts representative of the discipline. Their freedom to explore is unbounded. But when they engage with subject matter, the key concepts of a discipline are transparently reflected through the curatorial actions of the teacher.”

(Siemens, G. 2007 – 10 minute lecture curatorial teaching. Retrieved on February 20, 2009 from <http://learnonline.wordpress.com/2007/09/20/10-minute-lecture-geo-ge-siemens-curatorial-teaching/>.)

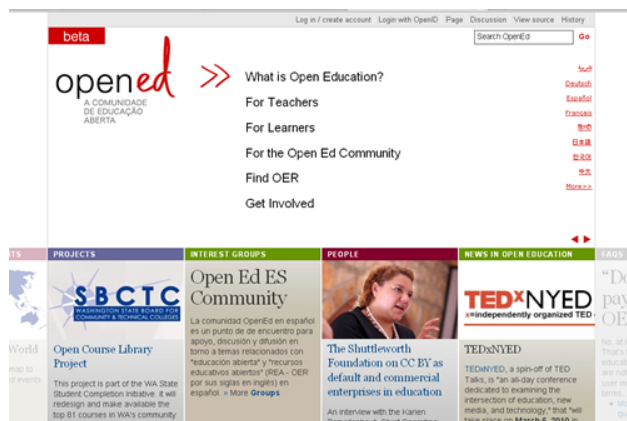
The concept of class itself will seem rather artificial in comparison with the concept of a network that formed naturally, as suggested by Stephen

Downes, researcher at the National Research Council of Canada, affiliated to the Learning and Collaborative Technologies Group, Institute for Information Technology and editor of the newsletter OLDaily, which specializes in online learning, new media, pedagogy and philosophy: “So there’s pressures towards using our natural connections to engage in collective learning, more than to move into an artificially built classroom that, even if it might have been an efficient tool in the past, it only seems now to be perpetuating relationships of power between teachers and learners.”

([Stephen Downes: The Future of Education](#)).

Last but not least there will be more and more opportunities of free access to educational responses. Some significant steps have already been moved towards this goal thank to the creation of the [OpenEd](#) community, which exists for some time also in Italian version: “The Italian version was created as benchmark to widespread the concept of open education and above all in order to promote the diffusion of open educational resources (REA – OER in English). Through the wiki we will try to share experiences, ongoing projects and events that can be of teachers and researchers’ interest. The community will also deal with content translation

from English in order to promote the diffusion of such concepts of open education”.



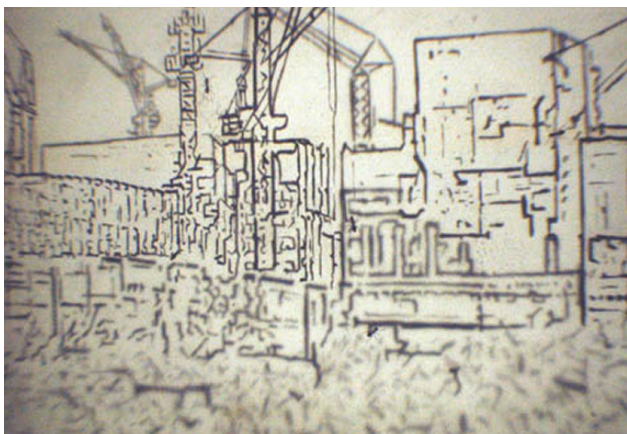
Eventually the new awareness of this dynamic context in which knowledge and discussion develop, involves also

public institutions whose function will be finding the right balance between ready-made education (we have been always accustomed to) and the informal one resulting from a daily learning experience. They will also contribute in granting and supporting the free flow of resources. Here again Stephen Downes' words ([Stephen Downes: The Future of Education](#)):

“The role of public education institutions should be, in the end, to promote this free flow of resources. To guarantee access to the public good that is digital content and media as the language of interaction today.”

Quadrilateral Biennial 2009. Angles And Intersections

Giulia Simi



Luisa Margan and Miha Presker - Fomication / Living Installation, 2007

Angoli e intersezioni (Angles and intersections). This is the title of the third edition of the Quadrilateral Biennial (December 8th to January 31st), also known as the Croatian Biennial, this year devoted entirely to new media and their influence on local and global cultures.

With their fluid and intangible nature, the newest -or as Philippe Dubios would say "the latest"- technologies seem to perfectly embody the impulse and calling towards transnational synthesis first of all the one between East and West- which moves this biennial, born as a result of a recent quadrilateral agreement between Italy, Slovenia, Croatia and Hungary. In cities marked by complex and numerous scars, like Rijeka, a city full of cultural crossroads, but also the

scene of intrusion and emigration, meanwhile digital art, with its' streams of bodiless data, has dwelled within the walls of the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, blending in with the common city areas. Drawing the attention and participation of many citizens.

Under the artistic direction of Christiane Paul -author of the famous Digital Art (London UK: Thames and Hudson Ltd. -2003) and editor of the New Media section for the Whitney Museum in New York -the four editors of the Biennial (Darko Fritz-Croatia, Nina Czegledy -Hungary and Tomas Dobrila -Slovenia) , selected for each country the most inventive artists in the relationship between art and new technologies. In Italy, the difficult task was given to Elena Giulia Rossi, not only did she have to explore the new representation and conservative aspect of digital art (ArcheoNet 2003) she collaborated with the MAXXI Museum where she helped out with numerous Net Art exhibitions.

Together we looked in to her editorial experience and cultural heritage during this Biennial, we spoke

especially about the choice of the four artists who represent our country: 0100101110101101.org, the Elastic Group Of Artistic Research, Lorenzo Pizzinelli and Carlo Zanni.



Dalibor Martinis - Global Picture/Sensor of Human Condition

Giulia Simi: The four countries involved in the Quadrilateral Biennial in Rijeka this year were called to explore the *Angles and intersections* of art and of the new media under the direction of Christiane Paul, a key figure in the exhibition and practice related to digital art. How was it working with her and with the editors of the other countries?"

Elena Giulia Rossi: The process of carrying out the project was very interesting and I refer also to the collaboration with the other curators: Darko Fritz, Nina Czegledy and Peter Tomas Dobrila. Christiane Paul has been the artistic director and the glue for all of us. Certainly, working with her has been an honor and a wonderful experience. The definition of the project, which lasted more than a year, took form from regular

conferences on Skype. On Skype, we discussed on the issues, planned and designed the works in the physical space of the museum, and in urban space. Thus, a Biennial about technology, in which technology has played a fundamental role even in its construction phase, undoubtedly facilitating the design, from an economic and organizational point of view.

Giulia Simi: You had the difficult task, as the Italian curator, to select four artists who represent our country. You chose Eva and Franco Mattes, Lorenzo Pizzanelli, Carlo Zanni, Elastic Group of Artistic Research. Would you like to tell us something more and motivate the choice?

Elena Giulia Rossi: You're right! The selection of the artists who represent their country is always a great responsibility and is not an easy task, especially when the number you can choose is so limited. I am so happy you have the opportunity to be able to explain my choices, I also regret not being able to extend the invitation to other artists just as deserving and representative, who would have made us proud abroad. In general the selection has favored works that, at best, respond to the theme chosen (*Angoli e intersezioni* „Angles and intersections”) and at the same time were made by authors representing the Italian art world. Each of the

slected works reflect on the topics of “corners and intersections” on different levels: the intersection between different media, including remote locations (geographical or temporal) between nature and technology and so on. All this is contained in each of the works, but each of them brought out a different aspect of technology and its different uses.



Eva and Franco Mattes aka 01.ORG - Synthetic Performances in Second Life, 2007

You all know Eva and Franco Mattes - 0100101110101101.org -, two pioneers, not just in new media, if you still want to define it “new”, they are famous in the media world in general. The identity of artists born in Italy but with an European nationality, as introduced on the homepage of their site, is already an element of substantial interest in such a context.

For the Biennial their project was presented in a single projection, three of their *Synthetic Performances*, the three in which the two artists have emphasized the historical performance in Second Life: *Imponderability* by

Marina Abramovic and Ulay (1971), *Shoot* by Chris Burden (1971) and the *Shining Sculpture* by Gilbert and George (1968).

Their work is often identified in acts of “ownership”, from works to entire internet sites, in the name of freedom of movement. In this case, their reenactment of the historical performance in Second Life, goes beyond words and beyond the mere act of appropriation.

The performances which the duo refers to, exploring the limits of the body and physicality, a physical and synthetic world that becomes surreal and utterly mental. Not only...the projection of the reenactment, allows us to focus on a particular detail that we may not notice is the resemblance of the performers to Eva and Franco themselves, this similarity is not exposed by the couple, who only reveal their names. One of the many pseudonyms which characterize their professional and private life.

Lorenzo Pizzinelli's works are also full of cultural references, especially of the Italian culture. Pointing out topics that vary from art history to politics. Technology is able to find an ideal way to communicate and simplify concepts and difficult relationships in a parallel way, exploring, not so much the latest technology, but the social impact of technology. Videogames,

networks, artificial intelligence, like the one in the play *Marinetti alla Quarta*, a work presented at the Croatian Biennial. He presents many different aspects of technology using his vast culture and intelligence, simplifying things and making them accessible at various levels to many different people.

A part from being his latest production, created during the event “Futuroma”, which in 2009 celebrated its 100th anniversary of the first Futurist Movement, presented in the main buildings of the capital, *Marinetti alla Quarta* has a very strong relationship with historical residence of Rijeka, the main character of the Futurist era returns to life and from the inside of a suitcase sculpture, talks and interacts with its visitors. Artificial intelligence, created with the generous support of the roman company Infobytes, relates to us and with our modern days. What is amazing is the way Marinetti’s answers are based on the authors own intelligence, encoded by the technicians, and interaction with the visitors also plays a strong role.



Carlo Zanni - My Temporary Position from the Sunset Terrace Bar / data-cinema 2007

Carlo Zanni, a pioneer of new media works and tester of different technologies and techniques, including traditional ones like oil on canvas, is the inventor of a new genre that combines internet art with films. This fusion is known as the “data-movie”, a name he himself gave to this new genre. His short film *The Ties between Illness and Success* (2006-2007) was presented in various forms: from projections in movie theatres to an iPod sculpture presented in the Apocalyptic and integrated at the MAXXI Museum in Rome in 2007. A creation that is still available in the artist’s archive.

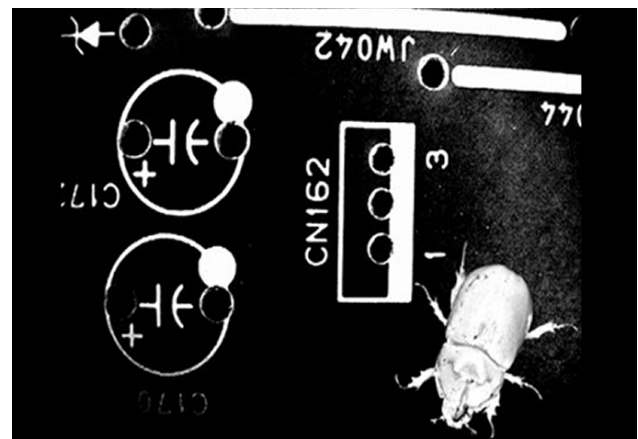
The Temporary Visiting Position from the Sunset Terrace Bar (2007-08), presented at the Croatian Biennial centre of Astronomy, is the next evolution of *data-cinema*. A combination of a large variety of instruments and genres like, internet art, cinema, photography but also literature and music. The images are in fact accompanied by a poem

written by the Syrian novelist Ghada Samman and music by the famous American composer Gabriel Yared. The sky seen in the German landscape in the town of Ahlem, came from footage taken from webcams that were pointed towards the sky in Naples, Italy. All of this emphasized with the merger between reality and fiction in addition made even more evident by the flock of birds that concludes the short movie, whose digital nature is made obvious.

The interweaving of the computer world with the real world, especially in the city, is the main focus of the Elastic Group that, among the variety of technology used in their productions, found those “flexible” and “elastic” qualities in videos, which they penetrate to the very origin of computer science. The work *Remixing City* was created specifically for the Croatian Biennial. The merger between body, landscape, identity, between the real and the virtual and its incarnations increasingly terrifying, are all contained within the *video-tryptic*. The video *Amniotic City*, created in 2004 and left intact, serves as a demonstration of the starting point of life, birth. Evoked by the amniotic fluid, a metaphor used to discover the origin of city life and its intermingling with the human body.

The video expands this concept through a series of images composed

of repeating icons, relaborated and animated with electronic sounds and mixed in to a sort of post-digital collage. Their research is very important for Italian art as it brings up peculiar use of videos. Videos that are compared to the liquid space of our origin and compared to urban spaces as well in one “remix” that simply brings out at best the “intersection” between videos-computers, urban-electronic and all of these with the body.”



ELASTIC Group of Artistic Research-Remixing City / 3-Channel video installation, 2004-2009

Giulia Simi: “ We speak about space, this time physical and not only virtual. The Biennial is held in Rijeka, in part within the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, which is located in town, and partly on the city streets. How did the idea inside/outside come to mind and how did you manage to maintain the connection between the projects?”

Elena Giulia Rossi: There were a total of sixteen projects, four linked to the city. The part of Rijeka that dominates is the harbour, where on the walls the

logo of a telephon company is usually screened. The Biennial has welcomed the work of the Croatian Dalibor Martinis with his *Global picture and sense of the human condition*. This work reflects its meaning through colour changes, combined information about the global economy, ecology ect.

A project that could have been in the museum. Marusc Kliffs project *Telephoning 2* has involved the whole country. The project consists in telephon booths as the setting of the performance. A special software automatically dialed numbers and the different people who answered the calls were brought to talk and interact with eachother and with whoever was in the museum.

Lorenzo Pizzanelli's *Marinetti alla Quarta* has instead been held within the area called Peek and Poke Retro Computer Club, a very strange place run by fans and strange technological artifacts collectors. Its retro look is perfectly adapted to Pizzanelli's work because it brings out the most fascinating aspects of the character who glorifys the power of technology.

Zanni's work on the other hand was hosted by the Astronomical Museum, three miles from the centre of Rijeka. The building opened in April 2009 as a result of the enlargement of the military base built back in 1941 and

now home to Rijeka's Astronomical Society that has been operating since 1974 where they use two handmand telescopes. This fascinating place is what gives Zanni's work a special touch.



Helena Buleja - Mechanical Figures / Photo by Fedor Vučković

Some of these works, like those os Martinis and Kliff, also had a physical component within the museum. Visitors were infact encouraged to come by the newsletter distributed by the museum's staff.

Following the opening, giuded tours were organized in various sites. Pizzanelli and Zanni have also received attention from various audiences. The country's cultural enthusiasm was manifested by the interest and willingness to move from several places, even on rainy days like the rainy day that they had during the opening."

Giulia Simi:Going back to the title of this year *Angles and intersections*. The reference may not only be to different cultures like new media does. Rijeka is

a symbolic place full of cultural and geopolitical implications. How does this affect your editorial work? How much did these intersections emerge from the work of the artists selected seeing as they come from different countries?

Elena Giulia Rossi: As you rightly point out, Rijeka, is a crucial point between east and west, and between Central Europe and the Mediterranean, its a city full of cultural and geopolitical implications. This is a particularly sensitive time because its soon to come entry in to the European Community. The Biennial Quadrilateral itself, which this year is in its third edition, is full of political significance. Quadrilateral is in fact an agreement that in 2000 saw Italy, Croatia, Slovenia and Hungary together in their mutual commitment to an ongoing cultural exchange and a facilitator of some commercial aspects, such as those relating to the transport system.

The activity reflects this commitment to cultural synergy between the four countries and the Biennale is one of the most important events. I have already mentioned some of the corners and intersections that have

emerged in various jobs, such as those in the media, between the real and fiction, and between different genres. Regarding the political aspect, it appeared that all the works transcend geographical boundaries and merged into a common topic, increasingly driven by technology and communication.



Marlon Andras Juhasz - I Garden / Live Sound Installation, 2008

A Biennial about new media has thus given the opportunity to reflect not only the cooperation between countries on a local and global level. The presence of Christiane Paul, German-born, but with an American citizenship, artistic director, has endorsed this aspect making it, in my opinion, even more interesting.

<http://www.bq3.mmsu.hr/>

The Sense Of A Clever Body. An Interview With Paola Bianchi

Massimo Schiavoni



Paola Bianchi's dancing body is everything, sometimes nothing, sometimes everything to discover, "expect" and fully understand. The human figure and anatomy, it's mind and introspection that implode strength and elegance, dynamism in the emotion she puts on stage since the early eighties. She has traveled, fought and stopped, she knew without looking back and she continued.

She dances for herself, as she says, "the theater is very little." You need to be aware and professional to clarify certain statements, today nobody gives you anything, and this proliferation of festivals and events real talent is sometimes not directly proportional to their expectations. Paola was taught to dance at the

school *Bella Hutter* of Turin. From 1980 to 1986 she worked in the company of Anna Sagna and then became an independent choreographer. In 1994 she opened her own company Agar, the one that in 2005 became the Agar Association.

To promote the dissemination of dance and contemporary theater, she works in art direction, festivals and numerous research laboratories and collaborates with various influential personalities in the world of visual arts such as Ivan Fantini, Marzia Migliora, Paul and Menno De Nooijer, Barbara Klein not to mention all the artists involved in her shows. From *Clotilde* her latest show *UNO*, Paola began her research and designs thanks to her artistic personal passion to novels and literary texts, from mathematical processes to psychological pathways to intimate reflections on the body and movements, anatomical visions, corporal, carnal and mental.

Paola externalized and materialized at the same time, her image is amplified because of the alphabetical study of the body, sensitivity level and specific

perception of the individual. In her performance experience she has internalized a “conscience”, imitating shapes, positions, sequences dominated by her thoughts or to decode the meanings in spectacular events both communicative and functional.



Her body stimulates skillful and centralizes both krad and psyche, being the center of reflexivity and materialization. She “owns herself”, thus reflecting the bond with others, whoever it may be. During the viewing there is deep meaning taken in through the eyes, which is breathed in and felt internally, a new body image, a new plastic sense, a new brain, a new “principle of control” of alphabetic primaries.

Performance is seen as a mental space, as a private conscience in a common area, “sede Opus est”. Her dance is like an integration of neurology, collective expression, enchanted metric orchestra. No psycho sensory distance, mimesis that

ensures the continuity of the flow of Paola Banchi’s emotions as a fascination and seduction sincinetica synaesthetic and the modular game dance”. Strong personality, Paola, in a critical body, also highlighted by the detailed interview we had.

Massimo Schiavoni: Who was Paola Banchi and who is she today?

Paola Bianchi: I was a little over 20 years old. I left the Anna Sagna’s company – because I could no longer be just an interpreter, I had to create, together with Enrica Brizzi Gincobiloba we established the company. In a small theater we met in Turin with Ermanna Montanari and Marco Martinelli -early in their career- during the eighties- but already famous in theater world. Mark had sent us a letter – there was no Internet and even fax was rare – with a list of the names and addresses of important organizers. We knocked on many doors. Sandro Pascucci opened the doors to us giving us a place for rehearsals and he gave us the opportunity to submit our first job during the opening season of the Petrella theater Petrella in Longiano. I still remember the smell of Petrella, the smell of the just completed renovation.

That’s when possibilities began to open up, we came into contact with the world of “experimental theater” -

that was its called- but it all had to do little or nothing with real dancing. We started with our little car charged with settings for the play beyond belief. We stopped at festivals asking for a room, a small space to present our work and during our summer travels, i remeber arriving to Narni – a festival that no longer exists – with ingenuity and insight, directed by Giuseppe Bartolucci.

These was the beginning, more than twenty years ago. I thought we could change the world, I was almost certain. I thought the theater was a new world to be discovered, viewed from an angle – not enough experience to feel the opportunity to participate and everything outside of the theater seemed to rotate around it. twenty year old ingenuity... In reality there were no competitions or calls for those under 35 years old. Therewas a time for the under 25 s, but I was already at least 27, then one of them for under 30 s and I had turned 31.

Well I never was part of an under and now I am happy.Nonsense! How childish to consider that, keeping young people in a ring, controlling them, giving them a treat every now and then only to be critized by everyone, deceiving and abandoning them once they have passed the threshold of the Under. Then many things changed in my life (Gincobiloba

was dissolved, I established Agar and worked alone) and in my perception of the world. Gradually I realized that the skills, the beauty of a work force of a performance are limited in the theater world.

I realized that that world was and is corrupted just as the one outside, we pretended to be a big family, everyone knew everything about everyone but no one really took care of others. We never changed the world because it also changes on its own with small things. The correct behavior was daily honesty. The theater is not all, indeed very little. My always rule breaking and nomadic spirit in fact has precluded me many opportunities. But I do not regret that.Not now and not ever. Now i'm over forty, I try to give a sense to the place where I live, change has come in taking small steps, slowly progressing daily. The horizon, though larger, in my view has narrowed.



Massimo Schiavoni: You have obviously chosen to be yourself and

you understand how this world sometimes seem so fake. Your responsibility brings out your passion and you do not feel the need to say yes at all costs and to all the bosses. Tell me a happy or bitter story about the naive Paola Bianchi and one about the alert and mature Paola Bianchi. Do you regret more your trip to discover the “theater world” or occasions “lost” due to the fact that you never settled for less or compromises?

Paola Bianchi: Hard to tell the story without saying people’s name. I will not say any names though, that would be unfair. My inability to stay quiet and pretend that everything is fine often penalized me. But I do not regret nor reject anything. I would remake the same choices, I would say the same things over again, criticize the same behaviors and ways, I would fight -like i still do- against the incompetence and approximation, two of the most common and serious evils of our time, I would pay the consequences all over again. I do not believe to be sensible, surely, impulsive strict with myself and with others. I can not remain silent in front of injustice, the rampant inability, especially when my target is someone powerful, power does not like criticism.

Massimo schiavoni: “Let’s take a step back. Over ten years ago your interest in the Mexican artist Frida Kahlo

paintings inspired thr creation of one of your first shows, precisely FK performing on stage with Paul Call. Firstly i would like to congratulate you for your show, it is passionate and enganging to the right point. What did you want to communicate and offer through that sequence of movements and sounds? It seemed as something that was unable to free itself from an external body, something inspirational physically and sexually. What does inevitable provocation of the painter have to do with the lightness and strength of your dance or with you artistic research?”

Paolo Bianchi: ” Initially it was the story of her life that fascinated me and not so much her paintings. Later i realized that the elements were inseperable. In her paintings her biography is exposed, terrible incidents and her fragility come to the surface, deep wounds, children she was never able to have, her affairs, her flourish, communism, irony and death. “I paint myself because I’m alone. I am the subject of I know best. Her paintings tell the story of a body in state of anxiety and excitement.

She exposes her body in a way a Christian martyr would for her religion. In her paintings you can see colours, shapes and the reality in Mexico. I visited Mexico, her home, I saw those colours and shapes. I realized that death in Mexico is

intended as a source and not as an end. FK was born together with the fascination with that world, a complicated life and yet so full of desire. I was interested in going beyond Frida's personality, universalize the story and then return directly. On that canvas there were difficulties, fears, power and the struggle of many people.

At that time few knew Frida, there had not been any film about her life and only one biography translated in to Italian. I had to find information in Spanish and English. I could not assume anything. I worked on her story as a story about an ordinary woman, full of contradictions. I put on stage two women, two opposite figures. One represented possibility, capacity, dynamism meanwhile the other figure was forced in to a cage of struggle, heaviness, and neglect a sort of physical handicap. I always thought that the disagreements, friction may arise strong emotions.

The encounter between dance -the symbol of strength, muscle power, weightlessness- and a body forced to limited mobility and the desire to be able to do so. Like it or not we focused on the defects of deformation. We spend our lives trying to hide them trying to blend in with others, probably because it's more reassuring and comfortable to feel like others. I wanted to give a

voice to dignity and diversity and Frida Kahlo was the undisputed symbol of pride for diversity.



Massimo Schiavoni: "How do you define the body, your body in the 2002 *Sinesuide imposizione verticale*? In this project you are on a text, a novel by Darrieussecq. What is your relationship with the text and with the creation of transformative-transfiguring using videos and narration sound? In my opinion you are successful because you are able to conceive a kind of installation in progress by placing human actions, videos and related works all together bringing out flexibility, agility, spaciousness and a faithful cool rhythm."

Paola Bianchi: *Sinesuide imposizione verticale* originated as a part of a more complicated show ADIUS Utopia. The work was done by Ivan Fantini (chef and artist, with whom I worked with for various shows). In particular I investigated the choreography while the video was

done by Ivan Fantini worked on the installation and creation of food enjoyed by 24 spectators. *Adius Utopia* began from Ivan's passion for pigs, he made a deep reflection on wasting meat.

Adius Utopia stages the fifth quarter (head, tail, feet, and all the inside parts of the pig) the butchers call cheap meat, able to meet the nutritional needs of everyone in society and becomes an product for economy, thus fostering the economy's growth of the first choice pieces. The scene in the fifth quarter in *Adius Utopia* was linked to the slaughter of a human being seen as aseptic, antiseptic, claustrophobic, where people struggle to live everyday.

Here came in to play my specific research about the body. Working on detail. *inesuide imposizione verticale* is not meant to be represented on stage in a theatre, action and vision share the same space. It approximately allows us to see the contraction of the muscles, the tension of the nerves, the vibration of the skin. A precise dance-off, in part concentrated on the details. Dynamic static motion, constriction of the place. The recovery of details in videos widens the closeness, almost pushing the vision within the body. I wanted to show the innards through the skin, the vibration of the interior

without exaggerating the shape of things.

Marie Darrieussecq's *Troismi* gave me the images I needed for body transformation from human to animal, from woman to plant. Its fundamental and necessary for the creation of my works from one to other texts, images, visual and audio. Everything learned becomes body, body transformation, and choreography. Parallel to the choreographic comes the need for written material. Not only to explain the actions but as a mean to conclude the work started. So these are the cards I play, evocative rather than explicit using texts in my shows. One of the ways to dig in the same direction but using a different tool."



Massimo Schiavoni: "After the solitude of the *Odyseus* and the various *Kytos immobility*, in the 2006 you performed in *Corpus Hominis*, three different and celebrated dancers. How did you manage to build the contemporary body and what

definition do you give to setting and time? Plus is the separation between soul and body really that absurd?"

Paola Bianchi: "*Corpus Hominis* marks an important step in my path. After interpreting things in first person, I felt the urge to leave the stage and become a spectator. Beyond that I wanted to explore the male body in terms of choreography. Compare that body so different from mine, it was so powerful, strong and had a particular internal rhythm. *Corpus Hominis* speaks of bodies. Bodies undergoing the consequences of their actions.

A dissected body, divided into organs, medicated, measured, photographed, painted, educated, be accepted, a celebrated body as a model in contemporary media that does not really belong to us, a "docile body", to quote Foucault. The body is a surface on which are inscribed with the fundamental precepts, hierarchies, and even the metaphysical orientations of a culture, that the same body language reinforces. I have decided that male bodies are representative of human beings.

I chose them because they are victims of themselves, the culture they created. Reminiscence is not a woman, its reality. The power is still in the hands of the male gender. I think that anyone on stage has to understand the meaning and real

motivation, like what is the purpose of him being there in front of an audience. At any moment, even in utter stillness – and indeed precisely in moments of stillness – we must continue to be, inside the scene, credible, believing in it. This is what the extensive studies that precede my shows are for. I tried to do the same with the three dancers in *Corpus Hominis*. I handed them my thoughts, my doubts, my written and spoken words.

We watched videos, we talked for hours about everything, from the food they ate for energy and how we burned that energy daily. An exalted body and then emptied, praised and reduced to an object, a body that can no longer move. It 'was in some ways a battle, but not between me and the three dancers, between us and ourselves, our body, our being. This is what *Corpus Hominis* means to me, these are the three bodies on the scene. But those three bodies, as contemporaries, they lived in one place and at the same time, a time that does not belong to us. The choice of the space was completely black beyond the convention of the theater's space. Was black by choice. And many times it was just working on this black, the darkness, the difficulty of perceiving the bodies, sometimes fleeting, sometimes lost in a haze that eliminates the boundaries of the site.

The area of *Corpus Hominis* is a place not all, it is a black screen on which we close our eyes at night, is the site of collection of images, the place of memory. And 'the black around us, beyond the boundary of our skin, the dark side of our western world mock protected and protective. Its an autopsy lab, alive but lifeless. It is equivalent to the black dazzling white. At the same time has a duration measure, a temporal location identified by this experience. E 'timeless time, not hours, but infinitely long and short at the same time. Symbolically, it is the educational development and yield of the body. "The robes erase poverty of animal life, hide those organs which are redundant for the expression of the spirit, if not covering the head, it is because there is the spiritual expression of the human figure." Here, even around and against phrase of Hegel, a concept throughout western and cerebral - the celebration of the liabilities of the meat for the mind that's how *Corpus Hominis* was born.

I do not think that the place of the soul and mind both reside inside the head, they're separated from the rest of the body. The brain is located in the head but that does not mean that the rest is removed. The body has an intelligence, a memory that goes beyond verbalization. The dualism

soul / body, mind / matter from Plato - the body as an alien, the cause of all evil a quote by Augustine - the body as an enemy, heavy and serious -, Descartes - the body as raw material, a body conceived by the intellect and not by life lived, a body in mind and not in the flesh, a body and not an anatomical entity of life - and Christianity - to control and restrain the natural impulses of the body -, was finally formalized by Freud . Lakoff says reason is made possible by the body, the core of our conceptual system originates in the structured nature of bodily experience.

Thinking also means having a body in dynamic relationship with the environment and many categories of thought are mental representations of states of embodiment." As Umberto Galimberti writes in "Psyche and techne" dualism, body and soul is an effect of reflection that looks at the man after his action allowing it to live. Instead watched from the perspective of the action, the duality is dissolved because everything that is reported to the soul, culture, spirit, already appears immediately as a condition of the body's biological life, and is that activation technique that allows the body to live despite his failure biological, its lack of specialization, the lack of environment. Here, I share these thoughts fully."



Massimo Schiavoni: *Per Figura Sola* come from your *Visioni Irrazionali*, after studying and thinking for years about Fibonacci's numbers and the golden section. Explain the relationship between these visions and measures, with the staging of the performance. Why does a figure remain on stage alone? The definition and the acceptance of a sort of helpless loneliness – I think – of mutations remained in the throat, exhausted space without being filled.

Paola Bianchi: The *Visioni Irrazionali* study was on scene, the public display of the thoughts that instead of merely filling my notebooks, filled and inhabited spaces, with freedom of form. Short site specific work, from installation to performance, usually in the form of itself. Investigating the series of Fibonacci numbers and the golden section went beyond the immediacy of the number and perfection. With so many performers who have lived my *Visioni* were

touched and the approval behavioral issues of which we are subjected to constant monitoring of our actions, of solitude is met before the submission of the manipulated body, forced, of transience, the static nature of the fall, attempted flight of perfection and its opposite, the grinding of the images of the breach of identity.

Per Figura Sola

This study has served to build publicly exposed . While I thought this new job I realized that I had to work for subtraction, rather than adding – as he would Fibonacci. Those numbers are internal accounts to the choreography. Remains the golden rectangle drawn on the floor. I wanted to achieve the essential, I wanted there to be a deep sense of that path, which I believe is the solitude of the figure in a predetermined area.

Here the patterns on the floor becomes like snakes and ladders. A fixed circuit in which the change is only possible within the box. We worked on fiction. On the transformation, or rather on attempts to transform. On being on the scene, about loneliness, with no way out. We investigated the space. Space with no way of escape. A space that does not provide freedom of decision. A kind of bleak and desolate area, inhabited by custom. “



Massimo Schiavoni: Two figures return to the scene in *Cessione*, you and Valentina Buldrini. Also here is the black is in the background together with the empty space as opposed to red. Memory of an autobiography, what role does this liberating ceremony, where latrine gestures live together with personal but also collective privacy?"

Paola Bianchi: "I am truly the greatest of all because I can make three hundred thousand lire in a night, and even half a million and send someone else to sing for me. "So who knows Piero Ciampi?" This is the sentence Piero Ciampi said in 1976 (great poet and singer born in Livorno, little considered in life, but now seen as, after almost three decades after his death, a cornerstone of Italian singers-songwriters) said during an interview, made me think about the meaning of our doing and what the outside world perceives. To our being recognized or anonymous, the impact on contemporary irony is needed to give meaning to our lives. In *Cessione*

the two figures to live in two separate locations, different and far apart, suspended in a black space, black was necessary, a fundamental choice.

Two platforms that float. One is the location of the gap, the dead gesture, thought that it had no voice, the other is the place of memory, reinterpreted, re-experienced and therefore little real. The first is suspended in a red semicircle, circumscribed and protected by a plastic surface that dissolves boundaries. Necessary protection, the intimacy of the place could not do without. This is the area of the gap. Within a latrine of a toilet. At first, the figure wears a wig constructed with VHS tapes containing the footage of my old shows, the real memory. The wig will soon be in the toilet, to become embodied memory of gestures on the other figure is the true strength of the work. The tapes are engraved signs that have gone through the whole body.

The same movement that the head – the place of images – get to the bottom of the back for getting lost in the moment. Another figure – that Valentina Buldrini, dancer by the full potential, a supple body, flexible, intelligent and rare ability to become more – I wanted to entrust the task of reinterpreting the gestures lost in the memory of performers and some attentive audience to her I wished to

Cedere that burden ephemeral yet heavy. The work of the dancer is lost in the air moved by the stage. Sweat, toil. In acts that have created emotional reactions. Sometimes we struggle to shake him off, those gestures, sometimes we go to find them to feel us until the end. But the memory remains in the body internally, difficult if not impossible to verbalize.

That memory dies with the decay of our body. With the inability to replicate the movement to return to being lost. I wanted to expose my difficulty in accepting the oblivion express the need of memory, personal, collective or historical it is. They accept the deformation in the interpretation. Giving new life to death pictures. *Cessione* is a will, a piece of autobiography with gestures. My stand on the stage is testimony, fixed point, acceptance of distortion, de-imagining of the image, post-mortem in the latrine. *Cessione* is a biography of the vacuum. But the vacuum is necessary.”



Massimo Schiavoni: Paola, what is the true identity of the protagonist in your last creation *Uno*? What is expected and what are your plans for the future?”

Paola Bianchi: The true identity of the protagonist of *Uno* is the lack of identity. The difficulty of a life fake life. Loneliness infinite variety which we are isolated in front of our personal and private computer in a very special relationship with the keyboard and the mouse. Agamben writes: ... The new identity without the person maintains the illusion of not one, but an infinite multiplication of masks. At the point where it nails the individual to an identity purely biological and asocial, Internet almost promises us that we will be able to take off all the masks and have other possibilities, none of which can ever belong to themselves.

This non-identity or better yet unidentità, using the privative alpha rather than the negative prefix, thus this becomes the true protagonist. Unable to really transform, even through costume changes, unable to fully share the action that takes place, unable to make quick decisions in arrhythmia atonal, one being there without being there. Unfinished movements, doubtful, approximation of the gesture. Done without an absolute sense, at the end of the

action, to the moment in which it occurs. Indecipherability of signs. Slipping in doubt of not definite doing. UNO is an act without solution, without the game.

Uno is a breakdown, a complaint of difficulty, an inability of being. Yet in these many difficulties there's room for a smile and for sarcasm that I found to be more appreciated and understood in the Nordic countries than here. *Uno* is in desolation, disaster waiting to happen, the scene of errors after errors (the use of space for use of lights, created by Paul Chicken Rodighiero, lighting designer I have worked with for a very long time, a master of lighting) , is the decline of our time, our land, the beautiful country. There is the silence of our imperfect time. Illiteracy aesthetic evidential. This creation of a desolation and this helps keep struggle of a text item from the book written by Giuseppe Genna wrote *Italia De Profundis*, one of the most interesting writers of the Italian scene, who with his cultured prose and never banality devastates our hearts.



Expectations and plans for the future....I prefer not answering the first question. When it comes to future projects instead continue to rise and follow each other seamlessly. Now I am focused on the new job, UNO, that after the debut at the Milan PIM February 6 will be in Vienna for a week on tour, then in Frosinone, Castiglioncello, Bologna and hopefully not stop there ... I'm working on parallel a show for children (age range 3-5 years). A job that should not be ignored, a different approach, lighter, but no less important. And then there's the attempt to spread the culture of contemporary dance in Rimini (where I have lived for the past 8 years). Virgin territory. A job I have been doing a few months with a group c_a_p.

www.paolabianchi.com

<http://collettivocap.blogspot.com/>

Towards The Edge Of Chaos: An Interview with Leonardo Solaas

Jeremy Levine



La Mosca

Born in Argentina, the artist Leonardo Solaas lives in Buenos Aires. His practice includes both commercial and personal projects that explore complex systems through computation, interactivity and generative process. Solaas uses software such as Processing to explore the subtle and undefined boundary territories between art and generative design.

His project, Migrations, samples bits of text from Don Quixote and combines them with headlines from the BBC news to create an evolving generative drawing. Dreamlines acts like a visual translation machine, turning the words inputted by the user into a digital drawing of delicate complexity and ever changing form. Void, an interactive and generative

application, plays with the notion of dark energy using vibrating particles.

Solaas extends beyond the digital screen to reach into the physical world in his project, Cabinet. This work of art consists of a 256 polystyrene shapes placed on a grid according to the artist's taxonomy of form, which he imposes on these random shapes to find order in the chaos.

The last two projects of Leonardo Solaas, suggest a further evolution of his research, opening new scenarios and opportunities for generative applications. Wish Cafe is an interactive social network based on the shared wishes of its members. Anyone can join and add their wish to the network, causing it to change. While Bola de Nieve is a database and an online exhibition that brings together the works of Argentine artists, correlated with each other on the basis of the preferences and suggestions from the artists themselves: these connections are then visualized into an interactive network.



Leonardo Solaas: There are always two sides in generative systems: on one hand there is the rules, and on the other the visible or audible outcome of the dynamics that those rules set in motion. I would say, the perceptible result is somehow “folded” in the abstract rules, but the rules are also implied in what we see. Not actually shown, but still somehow revealed. From this point of view, the analogy you are proposing is quite pertinent: the world at large does as well appear before our senses as a multiplicity which does not exhibit a self-evident order, nor is totally chaotic.

Jeremy Levine: The physicist Richard Feynman describes the situation in physics as analogous to an alien watching two humans play chess. The alien could see that the chess pieces are moved according to a system of rules, but the exact nature of these rules would not be known. And every once in a while a new rule pops up, such as castling, that over turns the alien’s understanding of what is occurring. Playing with “Force

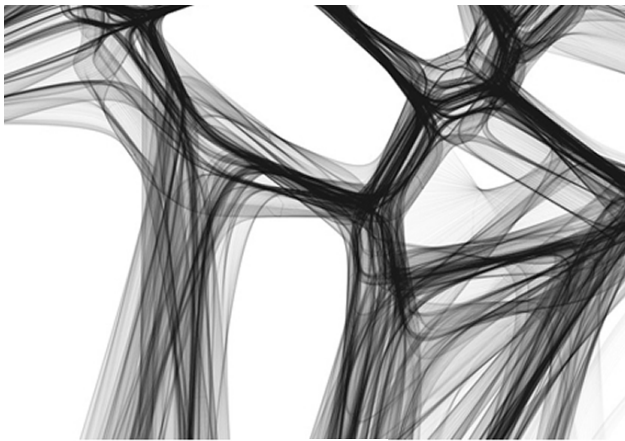
Knot” feels a lot like running a physics experiment in which one tries to understand the invisible rules (the analogue of natural laws) by observing the behavior of the visible particles. Is this intentional?

These sort of systems, that live in the region people sometimes call “the edge of chaos”, are like an open invitation for the strong compulsion we humans have of finding order everywhere or inventing it where we don’t find it. Modern science is one set of institutions and methods that emerged from that basic instinct of guessing the rules of the world we live in. Now, in a generative system, the rules are defined by the author. The executable code is a sort of interface or translation machine that will put those abstract entities in action to produce a perceptible result.

We can think of the system as a small world, usually quite simple, but still intriguing enough to engage the user in an exploration that is perhaps not unlike the pursuits of a scientist in her lab. How does this work? What happens if I do this? Any system can be seen as an open question, a riddle or a challenge.

Besides that, generative art certainly borrows some of the methods of scientific research: it proceeds through (more or less systematic) experimentation, knowledge is shared

and accumulated in the community of practitioners, and there's a permanent concern with the programming and mathematical tools of the trade. All of that makes it a good place for hybrid specimens like me, who don't seem to be capable of deciding which hemisphere of their brains they like best.



Jeremy Levine: On your web page you write: "I have a theory about the unity of myself. I'll tell you if you don't mind. I believe that, through all this schizophrenia of things I've loved and though and worked with in my life, there is a common thread that stitches all together (that's a fairly common illusion, isn't it?). That mysterious vanishing point is just beyond the line of sight, I'm afraid, but has something to do with rule-based systems, autonomous worlds, pocket universes, something like that mostly useless games that can be watched in fascination while they fatally deploy their own internal logic."

I am drawn to that line about the fatal

deployment of internal logic. It almost sounds deterministic, except that your work (ie: Biots, Void) includes the observer as an active agent, injecting uncertainty into the system. I'm interested in how you view the role of uncertainty, as opposed to randomness, in your work?

Leonardo Solaas: There's this a classic text on generative art by Philip Galanter, *Complexity Theory as a context for Art Theory*, which proposes a classification of generative systems according to their degree of complexity, from the highly ordered to the completely random. I think very orderly systems, like regular patterns and crystalline structures, can on occasion be fascinating.

An extremely simple rule, like repetition, can engage us through the sheer number of iterations, or through the rhythms and echoes that emerge from it. But, in general, our attention will be more readily caught by systems that are not so simple, that are to some extent unpredictable, random or disordered: systems that are, as I said before, on the edge of chaos. The rules that account for them are not plain to see, but mysterious, partially hidden, requiring investigation.

That element of randomness can have many sources. Sometimes it is just the

unfolding of some very non-linear mathematical formulas, like in fractals. Often the source of surprise is the pseudo-random generator that every computer puts at our disposal. In other cases the system will be open and use some exterior data source that will inject an unknown input for its rules to work on.

That's the case of data visualization in general, and some generative toys like my work Dreamlines. Finally, the user herself can provide that foreign input. Therefore, I tend to think that interactive systems are not some radically different thing, but just one among a menu of options to introduce unpredictability in an otherwise deterministic system.

Still, the rules of the system never change. We are never dealing with true randomness: it's not like anything can happen. In my experiments I often see results I didn't intend or imagine beforehand, but doesn't make them any less a product of the rules. That's what I was referring to in the line you quote: games that are autonomous in the very literal sense that they are defined by their own rules, however open they might be to interaction with the environment.



Propagacines

Jeremy Levine: How do you define generative arts, as a means of production- a computational strategy, or an aesthetic category defined by a set of compositional categories?

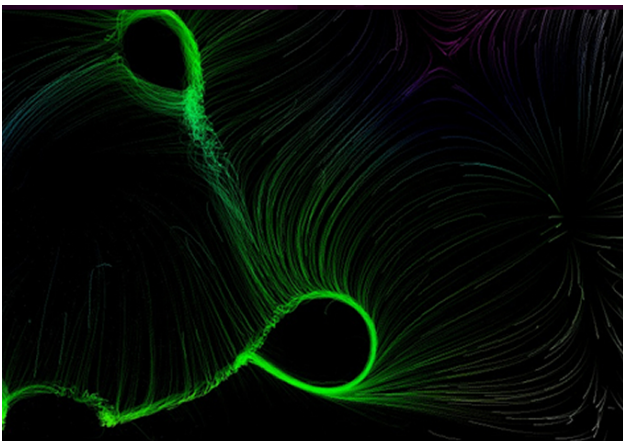
Leonardo Solaas: I will again resort to Galanter's article here. He states there that generative art is a way of making art, not an art style. I have to agree with that. The term should be considered more akin to "oil painting" or "collage" than to "impressionism" or "surrealism". There's a whole bunch of different things you can do with collage, different artistic objectives you can pursue. Still, the technique itself has a certain "aesthetic signature" that brings all those different works together.

In my opinion, as generative art matures, the differences in intention and style among its practitioners will become more and more evident. Up until now, we have been playing with the same toys, and bumping into the same possibilities and limitations inherent to the tools we were using.

That was perhaps bringing along some repetition and a feeling of recurrent déjà vu. But the skills mature and the tools multiply I expect to see a lot of diversity arising as a result of that in the coming years.

What all these endeavors have in common, then, is certainly not a style or an agenda, but a very simple, yet very significant thing: the use of rule-based systems. They are a kind of buffer or intermediation between the creator and the finished work, a semi-autonomous entity that is set in movement and then left to develop with a certain degree of freedom.

That's basically all that there is to it. It is not even necessary for software or any kind of digital device to be involved the system can be entirely physical. There are many examples. To cite just a couple of classical ones, there are the drawing machines by Jean Tinguely, or a very minimal, pure case of generative device, the Condensation Cube by Hans Haacke.

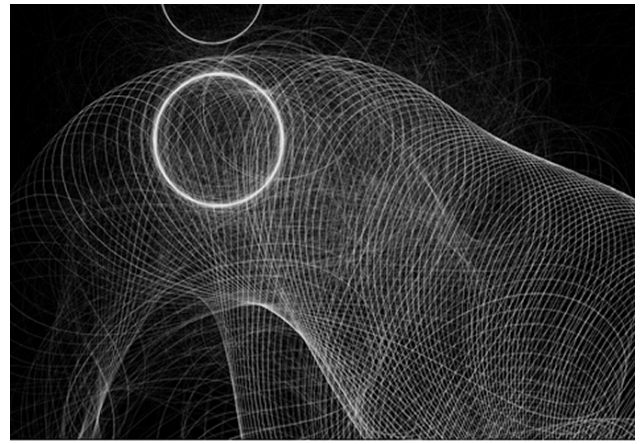


Leonardo Solaas: Well, asking for the boundaries of art is always the occasion for endless argument or utter confusion! I personally think that's actually a good thing about art that lives in the place of an open question. **Jeremy Levine:** The seductiveness of complex visual systems has become part of mainstream aesthetics. Generative imagery is used in everything from magazine covers to the motion graphics behind music videos. This can create the sense that generative art is more akin to design than art. Is this distinction important to you?

Now, thinking more specifically about what could be “artistic” about generative art, I would like to point to a curious genre that is very common in generativity: the “experiments” those formal and technical explorations that we all do and share with each other, which are not yet art nor design, but a practice that is perhaps more influenced by a scientific paradigm, and usually driven by sheer curiosity and playfulness.

We could regard the generative system that is yet on that laboratory phase as more “pure”, in the sense that it hasn't yet found its place in the world as art, design, architecture, data visualization or whatever application we happen to find for it. But that comes afterwards.

We live in times of hybridization and mixture, so it is not like I worry a lot about the limits between disciplines. I actually enjoy circulating among them, and perhaps not even noticing the difference. It often boils down to a practical consideration in which economic and communication circuit will these new explorations prosper? Where does the demand come from? The fact that those distinctions still function in the “real” world is perhaps no more than a remainder from a figure of modernity that is (I expect) slowly, but surely fading away.



Jeremy Levine: You did.
Leonardo Solaas: Your questions are very provocative and go straight to the most critical points in relation to this new practice. They would actually be a good occasion to talk for hours, so perhaps the most difficult for me was to be synthetic and yet clear about the main ideas I wanted to get through. I hope I could more or less do that.

<http://solaas.com.ar/>

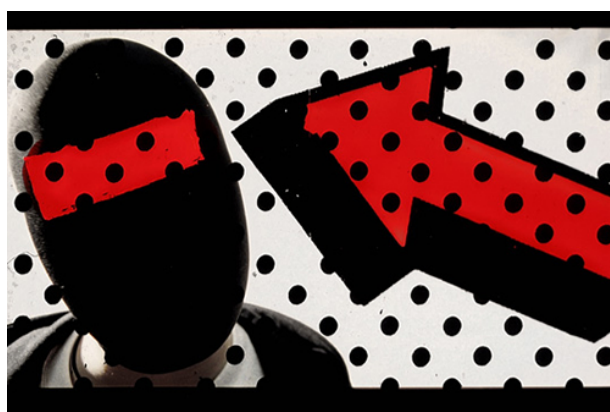
Bennet Pinpinella. Eccentric And Scratching Experimenter

Alessio Galbiati



The net is the new frontier of contemporary cinema, and it is through data communication and the digitalisation of information where the future, or rather the present, of the seventh art lives. From the launch of Youtube in 2005 everything has changed (lets hope forever), in the ways and of fruition and creation of images in movement. Bennet Pinpinella is a genial artist: born in 1977, he studied film at the Accademia dell'Immagine in L'Aquila and works steadily in film and TV, and is also the assistant of Vittorio Storaro. Bennet is an eccentric experimenter in images in motion, his cinema, fully visible on his website, is pure glory for the eyes and the spirit. In perfect balance between the analogical paradigm and the digital one, he's a perfect example of the potential available on the net

for the expression of one's own creative talent. More than making presumptions or critical interpretations for their own sake, I wanted to converse with him to investigate and account for a crystalline talent that is not so well known. A word of caution. The objects of the interview are films by Bennet Pimpinella: it is necessary therefore that the reader watches them, and it is for this reason that, next to the titles I have cited, you can find the links which take you to a good quality audiovisual streaming of them. The main objective of this interview is in fact to offer readers the eccentric and scratched visions of Bennet Pimpinella.



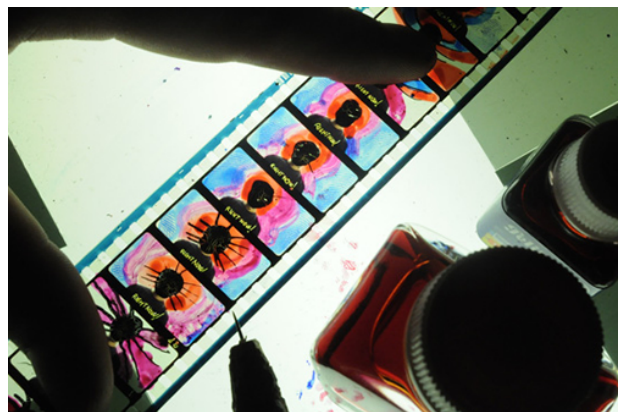
Alessio Galbiati: Partiamo da *Romborama*

(<http://vimeo.com/6419834>), the video clip that you created for the electronic duo The Bloody Beetroots. What struck me was the technique used, the craft-like method of work used in your films. I would like to know what kind of instruments you built for yourself to get to that result. In other words what is your method of work, starting with Romborama?

Bennet Pimpinella: Romborama is the synthesis of ten years of study. All of my previous works were called Studien, they were exercises in style that came from my experience at the Accademia dell'immagine in L'Aquila, a film school that was almost solely concentrated on cinema and that I chose over the DAMS because from the first year it gives you hands on experience. From the first year we were told to create a short film and, when confronted with 30 colleagues, I realised that I had an ironic attitude, an eccentric attitude. Everyone had made love stories, horror films, dialogue upon dialogue, things that are quite predictable in my opinion; I on the other hand animated objects, and I immediately found one of my fixations that I still have many years later and that always finds its way into my work: toilets, bathrooms. I always wanted to make objects move, like for example in Strange pots (<http://vimeo.com/6230594>), which was one of my first videos with toilets, I began to do stop-motion... I did it in

a crazy, unconscious and spontaneous way. At the time I knew nothing, I had never seen anything; I studied the auteurs later, towards the third and fourth year of my studies. My colleagues and friends would watch my work and tell me that that stuff was very similar to experimental cinema of the 1910's... in L'Aquila I did not have a computer and obviously did not use the internet.

Then I began to study, and I discovered auteurs such as Oskar Fischinger and Hans Richter. The shocking thing for me was when I moved to Rome and I had internet for the first time: I discovered auteurs that made incredible things one hundred years ago with very little means. For me it was a revelation, a stimulus to begin to really experiment.



My first phase was completely dedicated to *stop motion*: I made anything move. Padre Pio statues, and a lot of things like that; everything had a trashy aesthetic. Then I discovered

amateur films in Super8, I fell in love with flea markets and I began to wander into any open-air bazaar to buy Super8, film and cameras. Here in Rome there are gypsies, some time ago there were more than there are today, who recuperate anything from the rubbish and many times I have found, through them, bags full of film, with all the classic amateur films of a family on them; people throw away entire archives of images of their own family without the bat of an eyelid. In other words I bought these films and I took them home to do my experiments. I didn't even watch these films, I immediately began to work on them without knowing what they contained precisely, I instinctively chose a piece of three-minute film and began to scratch it. After two months of scratching I would run the film through my homemade telecinema.

Obviously everything at the time was limited, in the sense that every film had one technique, compared to Romborama that contains many techniques on one frame. In one frame of Romborama there's colour, a scratch and four or five elements of *elettraset*, that are chromolithographic stencils used by planners in the 70's and 80's for plans and architectural projects.

I used a different technique on every film, techniques that merge together

in Romborama, which is the sum of my very personal journey. It was so difficult to work on Super8 that when I found myself dealing with 35mm on Romborama I could clearly imagine the result that would be projected, something impossible with the microscopic format of Super8, and this opened up narratives that were practically impossible in the abstract logic of the smaller format.



Alessio Galbiati: With Super8 you were forced into an abstract logic because of the smaller size of the film. **Bennet Pimpinella:** Over time my eyes have gotten used to understanding the images on Super8 film, but an untrained eye struggles to try and guess what will happen in on the projection of that little piece of imprinted film. With Super8 I followed the outline of figures, sometimes I followed an arm that in the end I would discover would be a shadow. **Alessio Galbiati:** Though for example in Sarajevo some other city (<http://vimeo.com/5783555>), a work that I thoroughly enjoyed (in the

Rapporto Confidenziale film collection

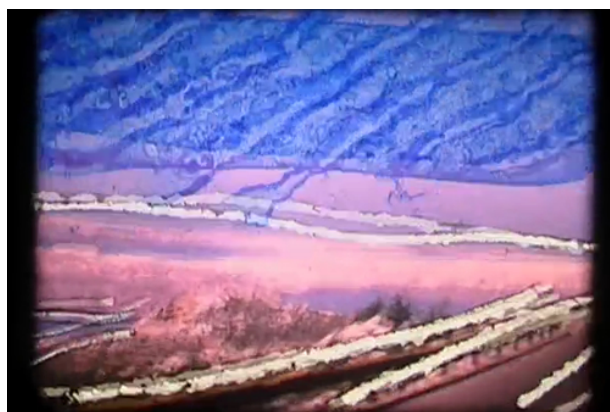
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<http://vimeo.com/channels/cineteca>

), you created a first block of images composed of scratches on Super8 that follow the composition of the image in a more “narrative” way than other works of yours. Can you tell me the story of this work, which appears to be the most complex of the work you have done so far? **Bennet**

Pimpinella: I was invited to a University in Sarajevo, that I cannot recall, to a workshop dedicated to art (photography, painting, video and architecture) where I was asked to talk about Sarajevo as I saw it with my own eyes. In contrast to other work, with *Sarajevo* I did something on a 360° scale. I began in Italy with my Super8 projector, I took my tools, my light table and I closed myself in my hotel and I immediately knew what I had to do. I went around the city with a photographer friend of mine (Alessandro Chiodo) and I stopped people with the excuse of wanting to take their picture: at that point I would position the camera with a tripod in axis with the person who was still in front of the camera. I would steal these few little static moments and through portraits in video I told my version of the city; this because I believe that a silent face can tell of a land much more than images that want an effect. For *Sarajevo* I had recuperated home movies of a

Yugoslavian holiday in 1972 of an Italian family. In this case I watched the film attentively; this because of tight time issues with my stay there, so I needed to know what to scratch and could not allow myself any errors.



Alessio Galbiati: In this work you also go back to a narrative: you make characters out of a home movie in Sarajevo in the year 2000. You yourself, wearing a red suit, that draws back to the dress of a woman in the home movies, walking in the contemporary city (always on Super8) that creates a dialogue through alternated editing with Sarajevo of the 70's in the amateur film.

Bennet Pimpinella: I continued the voyage of that woman in the 70's in 2008, making an artistic performance – let's call it that – in the same Piazza as the film, but thirty years later. When I projected it in the University hall, people were crying.

Alessio Galbiati: It's a complete piece of work.

Bennet Pimpinella: I didn't want to only use film, but everything. From sound to performance, editing and photography scratches and Super8, and much, much more... with the playful spirit of a craftsman.

Alessio Galbiati: The most banal but inevitable question: why did you chose to use film in the era of digital technology? I ask this question realizing that in your work, digital and analogical tend to converse without any embarrassment, fruit of some kind of analogical orthodoxy...

Bennet Pimpinella: At the Accademia

everyone was blown away by the digital elaboration of the image: 3D models and vector graphics; I wanted to take a different path; I wanted to study the origin of cinema, in particular the first decade of the 1900's. I use digital technology when I need to, I need my film to be digitalised before I can post it on the net, so I make a little telecinema so I can see my work. I do not edit the Super8 films that I transform into digital quality, I mean I don't do the editing after having digitalised them, I organise them with music but without editing them. Stan Brakhage didn't even add music...



Alessio Galbiati: Your work exists in digital format. Your concluded work does not remain on film....

Bennet Pimpinella: The finished work is digital, but I always have a film master copy. I have my archive, with locks and all. Working with film changed my life. It took me two months to make Romborama. Two months means that in one night I can do 100 frames and to do so I must have no interference from the outside world. To follow a logic, a sign, I must be c-o-n-c-e-n-t-r-a-t-e-d. I work at night because no one can interrupt me, I work from 3 PM till 6 AM when I do this kind of work on film. I want to keep being a craftsman to be different from other people.

What you can do with a computer in two days, I do in two months and a half and this makes my heart beat, makes me feel different from other people. With After Effects you can do what I do simply by using Chroma. I want to distinguish myself because I do something that very few others do.

When people ask me for advice on photography, I always advise to start with a black and white reflex, to have hands on experience, spend money, wait for the emotion of seeing the pictures. I want to know what came before in order to use digital technology with a more open mind and most of all with greater awareness. When the moment will come I will change, because I cannot continue to scratch film for the rest of my life.

Alessio Galbiati: You fell in love with this technique and with it you are searching for the path to your own individuality.

Bennet Pimpinella: Yes, to find my distinguishable mark. Before I began scratching I tried all animation techniques. I tried pin screens by Alexander Alexeieff (the most famous sequence created by him was for the film *Le Procès*, directed by Orson Welles in 1962, ndr), I tried animated paintings, rear-lighted glass, stop motion... I wrote my thesis on stop motion! I tried many techniques until I had found my mark, and from there I started to scratch film.



Alessio Galbiati: In these scratches there is the emotion with which you live through your art, your marks are part of your own individuality; for you art seems to really be an identifying instrument, and you even put your body on film. Yourself in your own films.

Bennet Pimpinella: I am in my films because since I found myself doing animation I never had someone who would be my actor; I made all my short films by myself. Nobody stays with you for 10 nights to do something crazy. I use my figure because no one can keep up with me.

Alessio Galbiati: I was expecting this response of course. A real craftsman of the cinema makes everything at home and by himself.

Bennet Pimpinella: Now that I'm having some response I am beginning to find people who will help me, I see people getting passionate about it. I'm an egocentric and I began the project called Double Mask [<http://www.myspace.com/thedoublemask>] where I wear some striped tights on my head and wander like a crazy man among other people, something to make fun of this series of DJ's who play with masks on.

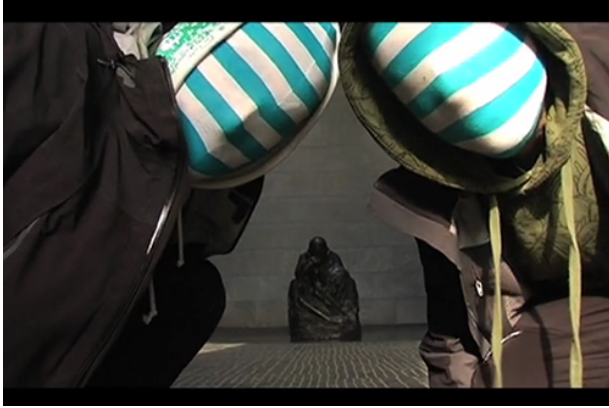
Alessio Galbiati: Will you do a series of clips with these two super heroes?

Bennet Pimpinella: Without having planned anything we do performances among people, to play with new cameras that keep on flooding the market. So it has nothing to do with the "scratches": it's a game.

Alessio Galbiati: Talk to me about Burning Emina [<http://tinyurl.com/ydf6tf7>], what is it about?

Bennet Pimpinella: It's a project that I have yet to finished because there are millions of frames. They had invited me to the Mediterranean Festival in Bari to present *Sarajevo*, but since I didn't know what to do I invented this thing to shake the festival up a bit. I drew a cross on my chest with a pen and walked around, with a Super8 and some film, asking people to stand bare chested and allow me to draw a cross on them. The first girl said yes, the second one did too, and so did the third, and so on: at the end I collected a lot of material. But on the trip home my camera broke and from there I wanted to finish the work. In Rome I set out again with my housemate, we went downstairs, always bare-chested with crosses on our chests, and we went to the bar and another two girls joined us; in other words, we walked like a kind of procession toward the centre and a lot of women joined us: white, black, young, old... two twins! All with their tits out! The idea was that I made them undress, I

put the tape on their body, and then with the pen I drew the outline of a cross. Now on the film, frame by frame, I scratch the cross. The film will end up with all these crosses on breasts. Breasts, crosses...



Alessio Galbiati:...and Rome!

Bennet Pimpinella: (laughs). Now I'd like to propose this work to Justice, whose distinctive symbol is the cross. This is because I am tired of doing work just for myself and my friends on the net. I would like to get to them to have more international recognition. I'm convinced that Burning Emina will be a very strong piece of work, perhaps no one will even notice it in Italy but I'm sure that people elsewhere will enjoy it.

Alessio Galbiati: your cinema, or if you prefer, your films, have been shared on Vimeo and on your website. I find this interesting because up until a few years ago (Youtube began "transmitting" in April of 2005) for a filmmaker it was difficult to expose one's work when you were still an

unknown. What type of feedback have you had? And most of all what kind of feedback are you getting now that your creation is channelled by the notoriety of The Bloody Beetroots?

Bennet Pimpinella: At the beginning of 2009 I fell in love with the music of The Bloody Beetroots, I contacted them and fortunately Bob Rifo (one of the two Bloody Beetroots, ndr) shared his enthusiasm with me and asked me to do something with them. This synergy made me understand that my technique can become commercial in a certain circuit... I mean appetising, interesting and functional to a certain kind of discourse. If I had made Romborama on my own I would have had 2000 visits! I also did two jobs for Bugo, ROMA [<http://vimeo.com/6234734>] and Oggi è morto Spock [<http://vimeo.com/6237948>], but these people don't pay. I accepted nonetheless but I asked to be given full freedom. Sorry if I'm talking about money, but today no one wants to pay you anymore!

Alessio Galbiati: I do these kinds of interviews because I like to get to know the trajectories of people who are trying to make a place for themselves. When we talk about cinema, images in movement, we often have the tendency to abstract this field from the rest of our time, when in fact cinema is in society and

in time in the same way that any other aspect of life is. The professions in cinema have the same problems as other professions. The Italian cinema is in crisis?! I would say that Italy is in crisis, not so much the film industry. But considerations aside, I would like to know, bearing in mind the fact that your cinema is visible online, visible so that people can get to know you, can watch, can take notice, how do you relate to the spectator?

Bennet Pimpinella: I am not interested in what people watching my work will think. I have never thought about the audience.



Alessio Galbiati: I ask you because your videos are full of provocations. Is the taste for provocation spontaneous in you, or is it a sort of game, or a deliberate choice in order to capture people's attention?

Bennet Pimpinella It is absolutely spontaneous in me, I am like that! If I leave the house I am like that: a terrible guy (laughs). I'm an egocentric person. In all my work there's always

something terrible. Even in Romborama... I sat on the toilet. I made a video clip that has been seen by 40000 people and the person who's cleaning his arse with toilet paper is me! I do it because that's who I am! Like Hitchcock who always appeared in his films, even I - in my own little way - want to be in my work. I must be!

Alessio Galbiati: When you aren't doing films, what do you do? I see that you work in film, do you want to talk about it?

Bennet Pimpinella In real life to find money to live I am a camera operator for TV and since I came out of the Accademia I collaborate with Vittorio Storaro. I work for him, I'm camera operator, I load and unload 35mm cans. I'm the classic person who works his way up: obey, don't answer back, but that's another story.

Alessio Galbiati: I find it really interesting that you do experimentation. Usually those people who gravitate around the world of film find it difficult to pursue that path...

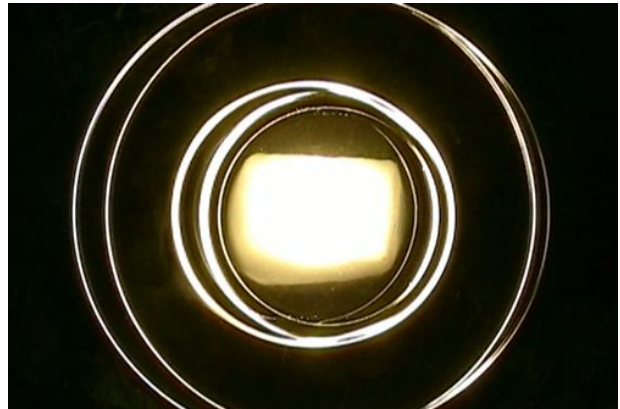
Bennet Pimpinella: I walk my own very personal path. This summer they asked me to work for a TV series for six months and they would have given me 1000 Euros per week to do this crap TV series; I refused despite

the fact that that money would have been sufficient for a long time. I refused it in order to make Romborama which is a job that I did for free! I prefer to make my own cinema, the canvas, my studio. I left Lanciano, where I was born, because I didn't want to work in a factory, then what do I do? I come to Rome and work as a labourer in film. Film is a wicked machine because they give you 700 to 800 Euros per week, a figure that everyone is attracted to: but the people always want more money. I worked on the reality show The Mole: if I can work on a reality show that allows me to travel and do interesting things, I'll do it, but if I have to be a labourer in Rome then I'll keep scratching my film. This is what makes me feel good.

Alessio Galbiati: Who are the artists who have influenced you, in the past or in the present?

Bennet Pimpinella: I am madly in love with the surreal cinema of Stan Brakhage and Zbigniew Rybczyński, whereas among contemporaries I believe there is only one true genius, Blu. On the Internet I see a lot of interesting stuff, but I can never remember people's names. One that I can remember is VIDEOGIOCO (loop experiment) by Donato Sansone [
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcBSEbhWafk>]. Another author that I

love is Jan Svankmajer: when I saw him for the first time in the year 2000 I thought that that kind of stop motion was the kind that I would love to have done.



Alessio Galbiati: He also worked for MTV. Regarding your style, have you found other people who work like you?

Bennet Pimpinella: Fortunately very few, but in the same exact way, I have never found anybody. For Romborama I worked on 15000 frames, as I have already told you, and with a vast gamma of techniques: colour, elettraset, fire, scratches. As of today I have never found anything similar on the internet, and this is also why I keep doing it, because I am one of the few who uses this technique, that I want to become increasingly recognizable. At the beginning I did festivals but no one really paid much attention to me, nobody understood my work, they told me I was an intellectual... I can be anything but intellectual. For example for Studien

N°8 [<http://vimeo.com/6231820>]
people saw poetry in it, but for me that was just an experimentation of technique, just as all the others were. Nothing ever happened with the festivals; before having started using the net and before having made this video for The Bloody Beetroots nobody had ever (really) given a shit. Now I get comments from Australia and all over the place. All the feedback is from abroad, just one Italian commented and said my work was terrible!

Alessio Galbiati: Let's say that with this interview I will raise the Italian level up a notch!

Bennet Pimpinella: When I received your email, where you said you were interested and you told me you liked my work, I was really happy. Those are things that give you relief and make you happy. Because most people see Romborama, which has difficult music as well, for "young drug addicts", and don't understand what kind of work has been done. For this reason I created a backstage (of which I am finishing the editing with a friend), so that they can understand how I work, how much time is needed to get those results.

Alessio Galbiati: What new projects are you working on?

Bennet Pimpinella: From the 23rd of

January I will shoot the new video for The Bloody Beetroots, it will be the story of an anarchic general and for the first time I will find myself working with actors, with a crew, electrician, grip, hair and make up. It will be my first experience as director. It will be a new challenge, I'm curious to see what will come out of it.



Alessio Galbiati: The world of videoclips is complex, it difficult to get paid if imposing a very particular style, obviously before becoming renowned at a certain level. I think that the technique could be ideal for the creation of film titles and credits, that are often anonymous and flat, what do you think?

Bennet Pimpinella: In Italy a person who worked in that direction is Gianluigi Toccafondo, the guy who did the Sambuca advert or the Fandango theme. He works with retro-lit glass and animation on paper, and has done most things in Italy. I have been asked to do these kinds of things, but they don't realise how long it takes. A while

ago a director contacted me as he wanted to do a documentary about Negroamaro (an Italian band) and asked me to do 10 videos, mostly the live session, in scratched Super8, without even realising how long that would take. It would take three years, I would become blind and crazy from exhaustion!

Alessio Galbiati: So the requests are to a digital standard without understanding the nature of your technique which is absolute craftsmanship.

Bennet Pimpinella: If I'm not motivated I won't work.

Alessio Galbiati: Have you ever

projected directly from your film, without passing through digital post-production?

Bennet Pimpinella: I can't do that because the Super8 that I use are old and ruined. When I do the telecinema these films get ruined, and the moment that I put them in a Super8 projector the perforations on the side of the film tend to break. I cannot allow myself to ruin them like that. The first works I did broke into pieces during the telecinema, and I keep them but they are all broken. At the beginning I used spray and I realised that the film would get distorted and would lose its focus during projection...



Alessio Galbiati: All in all yours is a great job, and what you have achieved up until today is quite impressive. The more you can work with 35mm film the easier it will be, because you have gained experience with an almost impossible method of working.

Bennet Pimpinella I only worked with 35mm in Romborama and the story of that production is incredible: I got the film in an unconventional way that I will not say because I think it's illegal. I got hold of it and I managed to basically get it printed for free, otherwise I never would have managed. Thanks to friends who work in cinema like me, I managed to use a 35mm camera and we shot in a very short space of time, wearing masks and doing everything quickly. I don't know if you noticed but we shot in a warehouse of a film studio. Film, print, development, shots, all in 35mm at zero cost! it was all perfect, otherwise I would have spent at least 7000 Euros. I shot and developed a can of film: 11 minutes with 12 cuts! So the

shots weren't planned in advance, I did everything instinctively; for this reason it was incredible to discover that the aesthetic of my video was very close to that of The Bloody Beetroots, so close that their cover is a drawing, of Tannino Liberatore, where there is a masked man sat on a toilet. The same as in my video! If you think that I did the video without agreeing anything with them, I would say that it's something quite miraculous! When Bob Rifo had told me that they wanted me to make a video I left and did everything without asking them, without them knowing that I had even started. Two months later after the first contact he called me and said it was time to think about the video. I said, "I have already done your video, I'll finish it and send it to you!". I shocked them!

Alessio Galbiati: Fantastic! What is your relationship with film? I mean as a spectator. And most of all what was your cinematic culture prior to beginning at the Accademia dell'Immagine in L'Aquila?

Bennet Pimpinella: It took me seven years to become a surveyor, I hated studying, I didn't like doing anything. When I began the Accademia I had only seen Rambo 3 and Sliding Doors at the cinema. I don't go to the cinema, I have never gone and still don't go. Then at the Accademia I got passionate about film, about this

medium, this language. When my professor saw my first short film, the one I talked about at the beginning of the interview, which was a love story between a toilet and a bidet, when all my other colleagues had done more common stories. he said, "You are stupid!" This comment and the disoriented reactions of my colleagues made me understand that this was my path.

<http://www.bennetpimpinella.com>

<http://www.myspace.com/bennetpimpinella>

<http://www.vimeo.com/bennetpimpinella>

<http://www.myspace.com/bennetpimpinella>

<http://imdb.com/name/nm2895305>

<http://www.burningemina.com>

<http://www.mammam.org>

Harmony Korine: Gummo. The Hurricane Of American Province

Francesco Bertocco



At the beginning there is nothing. A desolate land far away from T.S. Eliot's modern metaphysics and more similar to the media representation in the heart of a TV screen. It is disclosed again and again, catastrophe after catastrophe, blink after blink.

Gummo is a hurricane. It is a nature epiphany, so common in some places that in most of cases its resort fills the first page of local newspapers, clamped down by the ceaseless repetition of these events. Gummo is set in the American province of Xenia, Ohio: places at the limits of imagination, where TV deforms to learn and the public watches to teach the ironical foolishness of reality. In this world divided between decay and

hypocrisy, the strongest conformism and depravation of people one against the other, Harmony Korine's characters move. From Carver's songs to Altman's eyes in "Short Cuts", till American Beauty" and Wallace's literature, a film like Gummo comes out supine on the ground.

Harmony Korine is maybe one of the most important American independent directors of the last years. His career began very early, when he was 21 and wrote one of Larry Clark's films - Kids. It is the story of a group of teenagers struggling with drugs, Aids and sex. The incredible vision of the world through Kids teenagers made Korine one of the most rational and at the same time visionary authors of the '90s, as he was able to bring on the stage a new realism free from dramaturgy, but bitter and disquieting.

And then it came: . And Larry Clark's influence, which was maybe present at the beginning, faded away. It disappeared.



Gummo's characters are built around a depravation which defines their personalities. There are two psychotic boys who have fun in killing cats and define their self-destruction; two girls who are so obsessed with appearance that they force themselves to stick new nipples with tape; an fictious rabbit-child who tries to force us to see his reality, also inside the fictional representation of his death.

It is incredible, how the decomposition of the TV or cinema screen accelerates its course with a light lever towards the limits of imagination. Fantasy obsesses us through its own essence, as a tree planted in a garden in winter time. It's something that we hope develops denying the sense of belonging in a so strong way that it becomes real itself. Cinema is like an organ which is forced to reply to contraction impulses like rhythmic experiences. That rhythm is our vision that changes according to the film and light up or blow out, immerses or stays on the surface.

Gummo is an immersion with the feet beyond the water level and the eyes revealing the sea depth and the hands moving forward without doing anything important. The world after-*Gummo* is already a shattered world. It has never been a world. The hurricane becomes a temporal term, a contrivance to make the film begin, nothing else. What Korine represents has no beginning and no end. It has always been there, in a place that our arms can only indicate but not reach.

The film is shot with the greatest stylistic freedom. The completely neutral camera – like in *Dogma* (Korine shot another one following Lars Von Trier's rules) gets almost in the way. It overflies these lives without expressing them, but leaving them free to exist in front of us for what they are. In a scene, the most expressive of all, a group of people aggressively dash against a chair, breaking it, with the violence of a pack in a fight when the victim lays lifeless on the ground.



The violence of abandonment and vacuity of the token itself: killing with the aim of killing, without a goal is part of a human spirit which is becoming more and more bestial, without any scope. This is what Gummo represents. The characters are marginal; none of them is essential; none of the features of their spirit defines and characterizes the film. All are part of an aphonic voice that crumbles over the surface of that world whose track or memory is impossible for us to find. A child with a hat and two pink rabbit ears opens up the film.

That child is maybe Gummo's soul, its most obscure and rarefied power. He walks on a semi-abandoned bridge with unrooted, rusted, dismantled safenets. That child moves, plays, spits on the cars under the bridge.

Nothing different from any other teenager in the Western world. But that figure moves in an abominable oneiric world and his ears are like aerials and his hat seems part of his head and stunted, slender body. It seems we are in front of an alien or a monster: little and harmless, but corrupt and repulsive.

Maybe the beginning is a metaphor of a film which leaves the anonymous and outdated habits of the American province to dress up the most repulsive and lethal habits of the human abhorrence at the Millennium borders. Gummo is the portrait of the abnormality, which is grabbed through a feeble but unperturbed reflex and completely shows us the colder and colder colours of our modern life.

A Collective Resounding Body. Aiming Towards An Auditory Tactility

Enrico Pitozzi



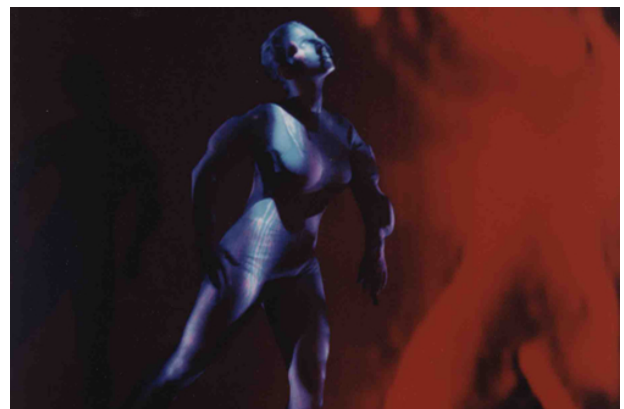
Among the more interesting figures on the international circuit, the choreographer Isabelle Choinière has been developing a journey connected to sound qualities in movement for many years. She founded and currently directs the Corps Indice of Montréal (Canada) company with which she develops research projects on the relationships between dance and technologies.

From 1995 her creations have been present in many international festivals: in France, Germany, Denmark, Brazil and the USA. Among her main bodies of work are *Le Partage des peaux I* (1994), *Communion (Le Partage des peaux II)* (1995-1996) *La Démence des Anges* (2002). Alongside her work as a choreographer she also works

intensely in research: her texts have been published in 2008 at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna. In 2009 one of her contributions appeared in the book *Point of being* by Derrick de Kerckhove, director of the McLuhan Program of the University of Toronto. In 2006 she began developing a new project called *Meat Paradoxe* dedicated to the concept of a collective resounding body, working in collaboration with the French composer Dominique Besson.

I. Intro

We are currently in an epistemological passage point which marks a real movement in the scenic arts and that primarily regards the role of the performer favouring other plural manifestations of their physicality.



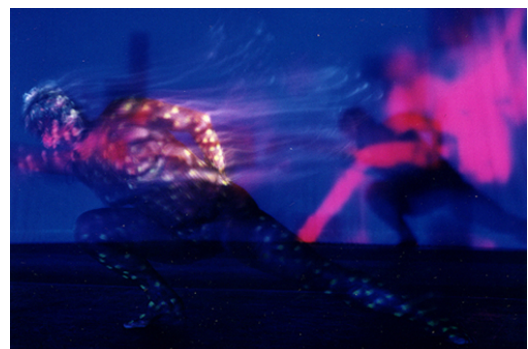
This break passes through a relationship that the contemporary scene has initiated with technology: here we will look at a particular aspect, specifically interrogating the definition of scenic *soundscape* derived from the movement of the performer in the work of the Canadian choreographer Isabelle Choinière.

It is here that the concept of “resounding body”, which is at the centre of this intervention, takes on meaning as an audible expression and manifestation of the relationship that movement and perception create with sound. The resounding body does not look to something that is simply anthropomorphic, the sound reconstruction of the shape of the body is not an issue: the investigation of the issue of “resounding body” – a voluntarily ambiguous term – means to penetrate into the matter of sound and at the same time, of the body. It means to operate inside a fine limit where the shape of the body and sound are dissolved leaving a plot made up of different intensities that operate within it: we will therefore speak of a “molecularised” form of the body and sound that resonate with each other. In other words, it means to work on a series of internal tensions that allow the shape of the body and of sound to be in constant mutation.

II. Toward a collective resounding

body

To come close to an initial manifestation of this relationship between body and sound, we will cite the work *La démanche des anges* (2002) by Canadian choreographer Isabelle Choinière where thanks to technological means, the presence of the body is extended to a different place to where the performance is physically taking place. Two different spaces and two different bodies live in these two different spaces. Two dimensions of presence are in relation with each other inside the same physical space: a physical body of the performer and a “synthesis” body that is “present” as a projection. This way the dancer who is physically present sees her performance replicated in the image and the sound track of a second dancer (spatially collocated in another place, even in a different continent, if necessary) transmitted by a MIDI data system via the internet. Therefore in this case the resounding body is the result of an encounter between physical and material bodies, spatially distant with reciprocal projections.



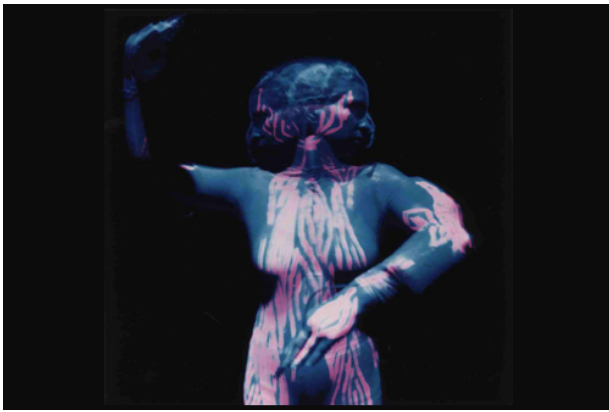
In other words the voices and gestures of the performers are captured by a series of microphones and sensors that are positioned on their bodies, and this data is transferred simultaneously into the space of the performance and on the net to form what could be defined a long distance duo. It's as if the two performers generate and exchange sound and images in real time, which come from the composition of movements producing a sort of net-like persistence of their image in the spectator. We can therefore see and hear every performer, *present* in the space of the other. This process is an invitation to a reconfiguration of the perception of the performer in relation to action and creates an overlapping and confusion of real dimensions.

In order to create this aspect of the performance, the two dancers have captors capable of capturing the sound qualities of gestures that are executed and attribute an equivalent to these on a sound level through a synthesizer.

In order to create this, the choreographer had to develop a series of particular sensors to be applied to the body. The need was to elaborate captors that restored the possibility of composing and capturing a

movement in a decisively more subtle and slow way, and at the same time allowed to intervene on the opposite diametrical quality, in other words according to a dynamic of acceleration or fragmentation of the ~~fluidity of movement~~ *fluidity of movement*, so as to compose in the space of the scene a real *presence* that interrogated the perceptive asset of the performer in action and the audience's method of perception.

The resounding body that transpires from this is something that comes from the real body, but is not a *presence* of the body, but rather a manifestation of it, a new sensorial organisation of the perception developed from a technological integration. Technology becomes a way to interrogate the potential of the body in this work, to develop a kind of depth of perception of physical knowledge in order to act on it so as to modify the score of movement constantly (and it's sound declination). It's evident that, in this case, we are beyond the pure instrumental use of technology. Technology becomes a way to investigate the body and expand its potential (1). Thanks to this particular use of technology where technology becomes a way of thinking about the body the choreographer works by integrating the sound dimension.



III. Placement of the resounding body

By pushing this process of work connected to sound, it is in the *Meat Paradoxe* (2008/10) project that Isabelle Choinière developed a concrete and radical vision of the concept of the *resounding body*. Thanks to the collaboration with the French composer Dominique Besson among the figures who generated software of sound specialisation of movement called *Ring* the choreographer developed an organised system around the capturing of the sound of five different dancers that composing their movement in the space of action like a real sound mass produced what we could define a collective resounding body, inside which the dancers could feel a shared sensorial experience, on the level of movement and on the level of sound production in real time. The elaboration of a soundscape responds to the mass-movement of the performer on stage, of an intense graininess that seems like a cloud of sound, a dense and

articulated atmosphere of sound particles.

In this sense the “resounding body” recalls a dimension of the body (or of movement) that originates in real time starting from the movement of the dancers on the scene and it is inscribed in a context of broadened choreography that the choreographer has been developing for some years now. The “resounding body” is, in other words, an emanation, a dilation of the real body into the shape of sound; it is a vibration. The body becomes an eardrum, a resonator of sensorial dimensions that becomes scenic sonority. Therefore the body is almost molecularised, subdivided into elementary particles and recomposed in the shape of sound. Once again we are outside a purely logical formality of gazing at the body; the intensities its articulation in movement-particles are at the same time part of the choreographic and research work on sound thanks to the alteration and modification of different frequencies.

What is extremely interesting, in this perspective, is that by working on the resounding body it is possible to intervene to renovate it on sensorial aspects and the perceptive arrangement of the performer. This leads to the abandonment of ways of composition that have already been experimented with and opens up to a gesture that is in continuous

transformation and, therefore, to a scenic sonority enriched and redefined each time. It is here that the sensorial aspect is reorganised and the internal part of the body becomes a medium. It's as if sound, in this project, plays the role of an added dancer: it participates in the organisation of the "collective resounding body". Just as Dominique Besson underlined when speaking of *Ring* software used in this process of the work: "The Ring is oriented toward a direction of open system of specialisation in real time of functions of gradual memorisation of the signal and its trajectory. Interfaced as entries in the Ring system, the sources of sound generated from the dancers become manipulable in space and time"(2).



Thanks to the placement of sound obtained via a device consisting of 8 speakers in the hall, the spectator is projected inside the body of the performer, and at the same time, is induced into a radical rethinking of his or her sensorial arrangement. In other

words the spectator is very close to the body of the performer, in a proximity that induces him or her to a "tactile vision" of their bodies in movement. The spectator is immersed in this living form. He or she is inside the form, in contact with the intensities that animate and sustain it; inside the flesh thanks to the sound that moves around him or her, that crosses and ploughs through the space. Therefore there are two forms that his or her perception is not used to and that must be redefined.

IV. Toward an auditory-tactile perception of reception

We can speak therefore of a tactile aspect of the working of sound. The sound elaborated according to the strategy of molecularity and spatial disposition operates with very high and very low frequencies and tends to articulate itself through a continuous wavelength that installs a constant relationship with the bodies that are listening. This proximity between the body of the performer (visibly or auditorily) does not however take the audience into a situation of extreme sound: the communication passes because of the different chromatic levels of sound, different levels of vibration. The spectator is therefore immersed in the continuous vibration, of a segment of sound as a gesture, and it is on this scale of variations that the attention

must fall. What is being affirmed is that the parameters that the spectator must put into action are not simply optical-visual or auditory-sound, but the process of composition of the choreographer Isabelle Choinière requires a synaesthetic glance and mode of listening, an active and contemporary relationship of the senses. It's necessary to configure the bodies in another way in order to receive these signals. It isn't enough to have eyes to see the invisible or to have ears to hear the inaudible.

<http://www.corpsindice.com/>

*Isabelle Choinière de Corps
Indice ; Autour des Demoiselles
d'Avignon*

*Le corps
sonore, entre écriture chorégraphique
et écriture musicale*

Notes:

1 - Si veda su questo aspetto anche L. Boisclair,

, dans ' Inter, art actuel », no 98, hiver 2007, p. 52-56.

2 - Si veda in tal senso il contributo di Dominique Besson come testimonianza della fase di lavoro cui si fa riferimento: D. Besson,

, Actes de Colloque Journée d'informatique Musicale JIM'09, Ecole Phelma Minatec di Grenoble. Edition AFIM-ACROE-Phelma, 2009

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